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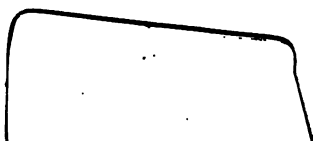
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THE LIFE AND NOVELS
OF
THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

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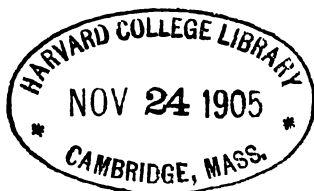
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**From the University
by exchange.**

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The Life and Novels of Thomas Love Peacock.

THE average educated friend of literature is conversant with the name of Thomas Love Peacock, on account of its owner's connection with Shelley, but has little or no knowledge of the novels and verse written by him. These would have entirely lapsed into obscurity, if Sir Henry Cole had not published them in 1875, and thus called attention to an almost forgotten author. This edition of his works, and the three others that have since been issued, have revived interest for him in intellectual circles, but have done little to popularise his quaint and fantastic writings. Richard Garnett's *edition de luxe* was confined to a hundred copies, and the Macmillan edition has not been extensively called for. George Newnes' one volume edition also does not appear to have met with much success. The present paper is an attempt to add something to our knowledge about him and the novels which the late Richard Henry Stoddard has compared with the writings of Edward Fitzgerald and Walter Savage Landor, because "they may miss popularity, but they achieve distinction, for unknown to many, they are known to the few for all time." In many cases the writer has been compelled, for the sake of brevity, to pre-suppose on the

part of the reader a knowledge of Peacock's works and the above-mentioned editions of them.

Dr. Johnson writes in his *Life of Ascham* that "the incidents of a literary life are but seldom observed, and therefore seldom related." This remark, inapplicable to his own career, is singularly appropriate in relation to that of Thomas Love Peacock. Nearly the whole of the scanty information that exists of him is to be found in his granddaughter's short Biographical Notice in the 1875 edition of his works, and the *Biographical Notes* of its editor, of which only ten copies were published in the same year, and from which Mrs. Clarke has taken much of her material.

As he was unobtrusive and loved retirement, and his letters and documents have been mostly lost owing to his having been almost forgotten in the literary world during a period of fifty years, there is scarcely any chance of our slight knowledge ever being considerably enlarged.

The present brief account is based upon the above-mentioned *Notice* of Mrs. Clarke,* and supplemented by information derived from other sources.

5- Thomas Love Peacock was born at Weymouth in Dorsetshire in 1815, as the son of a prosperous City merchant of St. Paul's Churchyard. From the father he seems to have inherited the application and business abilities that conduced to make him later on one of the most able and painstaking officials of the East India

* This lady, the Miss Edith Nicolls of the biographical notice, has of late years followed in her grandfather's footsteps by displaying a great interest in the culinary art. In connection with the National Training School of Cookery, she has published numerous books on the subject:—*Game Recipes*, *Cheap Recipes for Fish Cookery*, *Recipes to illustrate the Principles of Cookery*, &c.

House. His mother, who came of an old naval family,* endowed him with a love for literature. One of her poems, addressed to M. E. P., and dated April 14th, 1827, has been preserved, and is included in Sir Henry Cole's *Biographical Notes*.

Three years after the birth of her son this lady was deprived by death of her husband, who however appears to have left his wife and child fairly well provided for. This can be surmised by the fact that Peacock, with the exception of being apprenticed to a city firm for one or two years, did not find it necessary to engage in any serious occupation until he was over thirty years of age. In spite of this we know that he was, during the latter part of this period, in straightened circumstances. At this time, as at any other, his literary productions cannot have helped him much to get out of his pecuniary difficulties, as there is every reason to assume that he generally sustained a loss rather than made a profit by them.

His infancy and childhood were passed mainly at Chertsey, and the little knowledge we have of this time is chiefly contained in an article of his own, entitled *Recollections of Childhood*,† which he wrote in his old age and contributed to *Bentley's Miscellany*.

* She was born in 1754. Her father, Thomas Love, was present on H.M.S. "Protée," and severely wounded at Rodney's victory over Count de Grasse off Guadaloupe. The ship was not under his command at this action, as has been supposed, but under that of Captain Charles Buckner. Her brother Thomas, after whom or his grandfather Peacock was named, was two years older, and like his father in the navy. Her mother was a Sarah Pennell, and aunt of Mrs. John Wilson Croker and Lady George Barrow. The cousin to whom Mrs. Clarke refers, Henry Ommaney Love, was a flag officer in the Royal Navy, and died in his eightieth year in 1872, at his residence at Yarmouth, Isle of Wight. The name Ommaney borne by him is that of the well-known naval family of which two members greatly distinguished themselves, Sir Erasmus and Sir John Acworth. Of Peacock's paternal relations nothing is known.

† See No. 2 of *Bentley's Miscellany*. The article was reprinted in *Tales*

The beginning of his great store of learning was made at a private academy conducted by a Mr. John Wicks, and situated at Englefield Green. Here he remained six years, and soon after the completion of this time we find him acting as junior clerk to a firm of merchants, Messrs. Ludlow, Fraser & Co., of 4, Throgmorton Street, E.C. Mrs. Clarke has made no reference to this, and up to the present nothing has been definitely said of Peacock's temporary employment as a boy in a city office. The attestation, however, with which this firm certified to his having written unaided a poem, which he contributed to a paper called *The Monthly Preceptor*, removes any doubt on the subject. Peacock was only fourteen years old when this occurred. It would therefore also appear that Mrs. Clarke's statement that Mrs. Peacock and her son removed from Chertsey to London when the latter was sixteen may be anticipated by two years. They probably did so at once upon his leaving school.

Among the other juvenile contributors to this curious paper, that awarded the literary talents of its readers by the distribution of prizes, were Edward Parry, de Quincey, Leigh Hunt, and W. J. Fox. Peacock secured a special prize for a poem on *Is History or Biography the more improving Study?* and his attempt was printed "not as a specimen of poetry particularly excellent, but as an extraordinary effort of genius in a boy of his age."* Leigh Hunt obtained the fourth prize in the same competition.

How long Peacock maintained his connection with the

from Bentley. Peacock also contributed the *Legend of Manor Hall* to the initial number of the same journal, which was then edited by Dickens. The firm of Richard Bentley, that published this magazine, also issued Cole's edition of Peacock's collective works.

* The poem, and the attestation to it, are reprinted in W. E. A. Axon's article on *The Monthly Preceptor* in vol. ii. of *The Library*, 1901.

above-mentioned business house cannot be, with any degree of certainty, inferred; but the extent of his literary activity and studies in the British Museum precludes the possibility of his stay having been of any great duration.

At Chertsey he had already begun to write verse; some lines addressed to his mother, others to a cousin, and an epitaph on a school boy out of this time are still extant. Some dramatic efforts, *The Circle of Loda*, *The Dilettanti*, and *The Three Doctors*, that were all left in fragmentary form, are to be ascribed to a later period. Of these youthful works as little is known as about the unpublished poem, *Ahrimanes*, of which a first canto was written in 1810.

Four years before this date, and two years after Peacock had written a small pamphlet of verse entitled *The Monks of St. Mark*, appeared his first real volume of poetry, *Palmyra and other Poems*, which was not published by Edward Hookham as Mrs. Clarke states, but by W. J. & J. Richardson of the Royal Exchange.

It did not meet with a favourable reception, nor did it deserve to do so, although Shelley declared its conclusion to be the finest piece of poetry he had ever read. The reviewers paid the author the dubious compliment of chiefly praising the notes. These, indeed, present a striking contrast to the species of notes in which so many authors indulge, and which Peacock himself stigmatised in 1827 as "small scraps of many authors raked together, manifestly not by reading, but by dipping and making a display very nearly equivalent both in manner and matter to series of learned labels on an apothecary's empty boxes."—*Westminster Review*. The poem seems to have induced the Oxford and Cambridge University authorities to select *Palmyra* as the subject for their Prize Poems in 1822. It is interesting to compare the two efforts which

secured the Chancellors' medals with Peacock's poem, even though they do not bear much resemblance to it.*

The next four years after the publication of this volume of poetry, and his coming of age in 1806, were most important for Peacock's development.

A devoted attachment to a young lady who lived near Chertsey was never forgotten by him, and allusions to it are to be found in many of his works. He has, for instance, recalled the incident in the lines on "Newark Abbey," that were published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1860, where they were seen and admired by Tennyson.

Directly after the breaking off of his engagement with this lady he obtained an appointment on H.M.S. "Venerable," which was then cruising in the North Sea. This position, for which he was indebted to the influence of his mother's family in naval circles, was more honorary than fatiguing, so that he had ample time to devote his energy to literary pursuits.

Among the fruits of this are the *Stanzas written at Sea*, which the young poet inserted in *The Genius of the Thames* that appeared in 1810,—much to the detriment of its general effect, since they have nothing whatever to do with the poem they are included in.

Issued by Hookham some time after Peacock had abandoned his nautical occupation as uncongenial, and shortly after he had completed a journey up the river, *The Genius of the Thames*, although of no great intrinsic worth, attracted so much attention that it went through a second edition in 1812. The author, in displaying the glowing patriotism by which he is animated, makes here the amusing attempt to demonstrate to his own and the reader's satisfaction the superiority of the English river over all other ones in the four quarters of the globe.

Stimulated by his success, Peacock now produced

* They are both contained in the *Monthly Magazine* for 1822.

another poem, *The Philosophy of Melancholy*, which however proved a distinct failure when published as a quarto volume at the beginning of 1812. It is to be regretted that it has not since been reprinted, and that it should be now almost entirely forgotten. It discloses the pessimism of the author, which is such a striking feature of his character, in contrast to the vivacity of his jovial if somewhat caustic wit.*

Peacock, during this time of poetical production, also strenuously prosecuted the classical studies, which were so dear to him throughout the whole of his life. We know that he long cherished the idea of editing Sophocles, and knew all the principal passages in Cicero and Aristophanes by heart. He told Thackeray in his old age that he then read nothing but Greek.

In the year subsequent to the publication of his last-named poem, Peacock paid a visit to a Mrs. Roebuck, and a picture of the youthful poet and classical student out of this time has been fortunately preserved.

This lady was a daughter of the author Richard Tickell, a niece of Sheridan, and the mother of a son, who was to have a most distinguished career in after life, upon which Peacock was destined to exercise a great influence. This son has described Peacock as he then was in so interesting a manner that his description may be here quoted verbatim:—"Whilst in Gumley, Leicestershire, we had a visitor, a friend of my mother's, who in after years was the cause of a mighty effect upon my life. This was Thomas Love Peacock, who excited my curiosity by his conversation. He was at the time studying Greek, was reading some Greek dramatist and a commentator, and excited the wonder of the farmers who came into the house by reading—as they said—two books at once. He used to sit on a chair on one side of the fire, at a sort of

* A critique of it is in the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, April, 1812.

shelf, which drew out of the wall, which shelf held his books, and in the evening his light. Every day after breakfast he folded about a dozen paper boats, which he told me he was accustomed to sail or set afloat in any piece of water which he found in his walk—which walk he began as soon as his boats were made, and continued till our dinner, which was about 5 o'clock p.m. These long solitary walks, his paper boats, his books, and the fact that he was a poet, made him a sort of mysterious being to the country people, who certainly were afraid of him.*

The "mighty effect" exerted on the narrator's life refers to the following. In 1824 Roebuck visited Peacock at his office in Leadenhall Street. After a short chat Peacock took his young friend and introduced him to his colleague, John Stuart Mill. The latter at once interested himself in Roebuck, taking him one evening to the Utilitarian Society, which in those days assembled at Jeremy Bentham's house with the primary object of discussing questions of philosophy. By this means he became acquainted with Bentham, Francis Place, George Grote, and James Mill. He was soon impregnated with their ideas—those of the philosophical radicals, of which he was previously ignorant—and devoted the whole of his life to their advocacy.

The above-mentioned pleasure in making and sailing paper boats appears rather childish on Peacock's part, but was only one of the many eccentric ways in which he was accustomed to amuse himself.

The poet Beddoes mentions his being engaged in 1824 in constructing inextinguishable lanterns, at which, after they were made and lighted up, he kept puffing with a pair of bellows.†

* See *Autobiography and Letters of the Right Hon. J. A. Roebuck*, London, 1897, p. 8.

† See *Letters of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, London, 1894, p. 24.

Not content with enjoying these harmless jokes alone, he imparted a knowledge of them to his friends. Shelley, for example, became devoted to the paper boat sport, and some of the most pleasant hours spent by the two friends together were passed in this way at the Primrose Hill Pond and elsewhere.

The friendship with Shelley began in 1812. Mrs. Clarke has definitely stated that this occurred at Nant Qwillt, near Rhayadr in North Wales. As she has here certainly made the topographical error of locating Rhayadr in North instead of South Wales, so it is possible that she may have committed the more important mistake of explaining the meeting as a first one, although this had already taken place. Edward Hookham, of the printing firm and the great Library in Old Bond Street, who at this time was the personal friend and publisher of both Shelley and Peacock, can very well have brought them together in London sometime before this, in which case the Nant Qwillt affair would be the outcome of mutual arrangement.*

However this may be, the acquaintance begun rapidly became cordial and intimate. In the ten years of its duration, in which Shelley was being virulently attacked on all sides, Peacock stood by him, and did not once leave him in the lurch as many of his other friends did. In spite of his protestation of Harriet Shelley's innocence, and his inability to understand or approve of the husband's desertion from her, which temporarily led to a slight misunderstanding, he did not in any way interfere or make himself obnoxious at this critical period in Shelley's life.†

*. Dowden, in his *Life of Shelley*, London, 1886, note vol. i., p. 274, has also expressed his doubt as to the accuracy of Mrs. Clarke's statement. He has, however, himself made a singular mistake (vol. i., p. 275), in imagining Shelley to have got to know the Hookhams through Peacock.

† Peacock's emphatic statement as to Harriet's innocence in the *Memoirs of Shelley* has played an important part in the controversy as to whether

And later on, when the latter was in monetary difficulties, and in danger of being arrested for debt, Peacock assisted him to get out of them, and visited Godwin on his behalf, who was trying to take advantage of his prospective son-in-law's unpleasant situation.

On the other hand he was under great obligations to Shelley, since he received from him for some time a yearly allowance of £100.

Curious as the association of two such opposite characters may seem, this friendship with a practical and common sense man was one of the most beneficial of all those ever made by the wayward enthusiast, who, under

Shelley was right or wrong in leaving his first wife for the lady who subsequently became his second one. A few remarks may be here made on the subject, although it is perhaps time that this unpleasant topic of literary scandal should be finally laid to rest. In recent years Dowden and Garnett have made a spirited vindication of Shelley against many of the exaggerated charges and vicious attacks which have been directed against him. The statement that both these gentlemen have written in the interest of the Shelley family, if it be true, which it is probably not, does not necessarily invalidate their arguments any more than the fact of two of the witnesses of Harriet's alleged misconduct before the separation, Godwin and his daughter, being not disinterested and therefore unable to judge the matter fairly and dispassionately, altogether deprives their evidence of value. The fact also of Harriet's faithlessness after Shelley had deserted her, which can be now taken for proved, does not strengthen the truth of the assertion that she was guiltless before this had occurred. If it should be admitted, however, that she was innocent up to this time, so that the importance of Peacock's testimony and that of others should be in no way minimised, it would seem, as Dowden has pointed out, that Shelley was at least convinced to the contrary. Shelley did not also attach the same importance to the marriage vow and its obligations that is done by those who believe in Christianity, or the institutions which have originated from and have been fostered by it. As Trelawney has written, he was rather of the opinion—shared by Mary Godwin's parents as by herself—that “the sexes should not be held together when their minds become thoroughly estranged.” These ideas, in an embryo form, were already advocated by him long before matters with Harriet had come to a crisis, so that it seems clear that if she did not know of them when she married, she must have acquired a knowledge of them soon afterwards. In her remarkable letter to Mrs. Nugent, dated

Godwin's guidance, "took abstract reason for the rule of conduct, and abstract good for its end."*

Shelley has left us some descriptions of Peacock. In a letter to Jefferson Hogg of November, 1813, he writes: "He is a very mild agreeable man and a good scholar. His enthusiasm is not very great, nor his views very comprehensive: but he is neither superstitious, ill-tempered, dogmatical, nor proud." One of Shelley's guests at this time was not so impressed, and dubbed him a "cold scholar with neither taste nor feeling." Somewhat similar to this is Shelley's own reference in his extraordinary letter to Harriet from Troyes, dated August 13th, 1814. He speaks here of his friend in an irritable manner, which shows that the latter's disapproval of his relations to Harriet had embittered him; but he recognises also, for the same reason, that he cannot leave her in England safer provided for and in better hands than his:—"I have written to P. to superintend money matters; he is expensive, inconsiderate, and cold, but surely not utterly perfidious and unfriendly and unmindful of our kindness to him; besides interest will secure his attention to these things."

On Shelley's return with Mary Godwin, Peacock visited them; but the friend of Harriet never seems to have fully

20th November, 1814 (*The Nation*, New York, 1889), she writes:—"Mr. S. has become profligate and sensual owing entirely to Godwin's *Political Justice*." In other words, Shelley had eloped with Mary and abandoned her, because he felt that as they could not agree or understand each other, he was perfectly justified, as Godwin had taught, in transferring his love to another. Dowden and Garnett have therefore been, to a certain degree, justified in exonerating Shelley from many of the charges which have been so indiscriminately brought against him without, however, exculpating him from all blame. While admiring Peacock's vigorous defence of Harriet, it is quite unnecessary to be such a worshipper of it as Buchanan was, who declared that he would rather have written it than have been the author of the *Cenci* and *Prometheus Unbound*."

* See Hazlitt in *The Spirit of the Age*, London, 1825, p. 36.

gained her rival's favour. In 1817 she went out of his way, finding him "morally" disgusting, and stating that Mrs. Leigh Hunt considered him "very ill-tempered." He retained, however, the confidence and respect of her husband until the premature close of his life, when he was left conjointly with Byron an executor and legatee of £1,000.

No attempt can be here made to trace the course of this friendship, as an account of it is included in any life of Shelley. Allusion may, however, be made to two incidents.

Peacock accompanied Shelley on a visit to Scotland, and it may be at this time that he acquired his dislike of that country and its inhabitants. A trip up the Thames, undertaken by both of them, supplied details for the similar one in *Crotchet Castle*, and appears also to have done the same for the river voyage at the end of *The Revolt of Islam*.

It has been generally assumed that the literary influence of the one upon the other may be almost regarded as a negligible quantity.

That intercourse with Shelley supplied Peacock with material for *Nightmare Abbey* has been admitted, and an attempt is made in another part of the present paper to show that it also did the same for *Melincourt* and *Headlong Hall*. The more talented of the two authors, on the other hand, was also benefited, even though this is denied because no direct influence of Peacock is traceable in his works. Classical studies he pursued at his friend's initiative, and with his help, hindered his further prosecuting or again relapsing into the sickly romanticism and wild language of his early literary period. *Alastor* and *The Revolt of Islam* owe at least something of their "noble form" to Peacock, if they should not do so for their "imaginative grandeur," as Lord Houghton would in addition have us believe.

A want of imagery on Peacock's part, together with the inability of understanding others in possession of it, is disclosed in his "Four Ages of Poetry," which was published in *Ollier's Literary Miscellany* in 1820. The opinions here expressed are alone sufficient to show that its author was what Shelley said of him, namely, "a nursling of the exact and superficial school of poetry." Indeed this essay shows him to have been no believer in poetry being chiefly "the expression of the imagination" as the poet of *Alastor* and *The Revolt of Islam* claimed in the *Defence of Poetry*.

Not only was this reply written, but Peacock's magazine contribution seems to have been a signal for the appearance of others bearing on the same question. Barry Cornwall wrote another *Defence of Poetry*, while Leigh Hunt, who was the means of introducing this gentleman to Peacock and thus of inaugurating an acquaintance which lasted many years,* was responsible for an article entitled "What is Poetry"?

It remains to mention that the friendship between Shelley and Peacock, in addition to those already stated, has left two other literary traces of its existence.

The former wrote to the latter his charming letters from Italy, which first appeared in 1860 in *Fraser's Magazine*, and their recipient contributed for two years a "Memoir" of his distinguished correspondent to the pages of the same journal.

Of the poetical works written by Peacock during this period of literary activity only one or two are in any way noticeable.

A nursery epic called *Sir Hornbook; or Childe Lancelot's Expedition*, a grammatico-allegorical ballad, was issued by a publishing firm, Sharpe and Hailes, in

* See *Autobiographical Fragment of Bryan Waller Proctor*, London, 1877, p. 136.

the February of 1814, and afterwards passed through several editions,* while the subsequent month produced *Sir Proteus*, which was a playful but feeble attack on Lord Byron, to whom it was also dedicated.†

More significant than these was the elegant poem of the classical school, *Rhododaphne*, of 1818. It is Peacock's most successful lengthy effort as a poet. As in his other efforts in verse and prose, the interest does not lie in the story, but in the manner of dealing with it; in the sentiments and diction rather than the events. Shelley eulogised it as being "of the most remarkable character," anticipating for it "extraordinary success." In the criticism he has left of it, impressed by the erudite knowledge of the friend who had assisted him in his own classical studies, he enthusiastically writes:—"This is to be a scholar; this is to have read Homer and Sophocles and Plato." And Medwin, who either through ignorance or a desire to be humourous, calls it "Rhododendron," supports this in a sentence of praise, which also discloses the reception that the poem met with, for "although containing passages that throw into shade all that Rogers and Campbell in their cold and stilted didactics have produced, it fell dead from the press."‡

* This poem did not first appear in 1818, as stated by Mrs. Clarke and other writers who have alluded to it. A critique of it is already contained in the May number of the *British Critic* for 1814.

† It was sent to Byron by Samuel Rogers, who wrote to the effect that the author had evidently drawn his lordship's name into the poem, in order to gain circulation for it. The satire was not of a sufficiently strong order to irritate Byron, who returned it to the sender with the cynical remark that he wondered he was still alive after all the censure.

‡ See Medwin's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i., p. 308. Shortly after its anonymous publication in England, *Rhododaphne* was issued in America with Peacock's Preface and Notes in extenso; but was, strange to say, at once taken for a work of a Mr. Richard Dabney of Louisa County, Virginia, being attributed to him, for instance, in *The Evangelical and Literary Magazine*, Virginia, vol. ii., 1819. So late as the year 1843, some time after

Disheartened, Peacock did not again attempt to write any volumes of verse, and *Rhododaphne* is therefore the last great effort in poetry we have from his pen.

Two years before its publication his first tale appeared. As the novels are specially dealt with in the second part of the present paper, it is unnecessary to make any further reference to them here.

This time of union with Shelley, which was so important for Peacock on account of his literary work, was still more so because of an appointment that partly turned his thoughts into another channel, and ultimately his energy almost entirely into another direction. In 1819, namely, he was appointed a clerk in the service of the old East India Company, and although he had leisure to follow his literary tendencies for some twenty years, he was unable to do so after then. For in the period 1836-56, which saw him in a high official position, he wrote—with the exception of a few stray poems and sundry contributions to periodical literature—absolutely nothing whatever.

The cause of this appointment, which summarily brought to a close the long time of indefinite occupation, in which Peacock was once upon the point of emigrating to Canada, is not difficult to find. One of his old school-fellows, Peter Auber, was then in the employment of the East India Company, and it was upon his recommendation, and with his aid, that it was probably brought about. A MSS. report on "Ryotwar and Zemindary Settlements" is still extant, and was probably written in connection with the more formal than real examination which the candidates

the death of this gentleman, who does not appear to have ever disavowed being the author, it was again reprinted in the June and July numbers of vol. 9 of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, Richmond, Virginia, as a work of his. The contributor, who announces himself as a friend of Mr. Dabney, even goes so far as to express a hope that W. C. Bryant, in his selection from American poets, might be induced to choose some verses from it.

of those days had to go through to obtain admission. The connection with this administrative body that then exercised a paramount influence in Indian affairs, commencing at the same time as that of Edward Strachey and James Mill was first severed by Peacock after the completion of thirty-seven years of active work on its behalf.

Shelley was apprised of his friend's good fortune by one of the authors of the *Rejected Addresses*, who like his brother, was a personal acquaintance of both of them. Pleased to hear of the lucrative benefit derived from the appointment by one who had at times needed pecuniary assistance from himself, he writes in a letter dated Naples, 25th February, 1819:—"I am much interested to hear of your progress in the object of your removal to London, especially as I hear from Horace Smith of the advantage attending it. There is no person in the world who would more sincerely rejoice in any good fortune that might befall you than I should. Leigh Hunt, who also owed much to Shelley's generosity was relieved by the improvement in the position of the other principal claimant to it. Writing to Mary Shelley he says:—"You have heard, of course, of Peacock's appointment in the India House. We joke him upon his new Oriental grandeur, his Brahminical learning, and his inevitable tendencies to be one of the corrupt, upon which he seems to apprehend Shelleian objurgation. It is an honour to him that 'prosperity' sits on him well. He is very pleasant and hospitable."*

To such an extent were his circumstances improved that he soon felt justified in marrying, and led to the altar, in March, 1820, Miss Jane Gryffydd, whom he had known for some years. Her nationality is sufficiently revealed by her maiden name, or the appellations bestowed on her afterwards by her husband's friends, for Beddoe

* See *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*, London, 1862, vol. i., p. 126.

called her "a Welsh turtle," and Shelley "that snow white Snowdonian antelope."

From his marriage with this lady, who predeceased him in 1852, Peacock had one son and three daughters. The son, Edward Gryffyd, was for a short time a clerk in the India Office, and died in London, January, 1867. Mary Ellen, the eldest child, married Lieutenant Nicolls in 1844, and five years after his death, which occurred two months after the marriage, became the first wife of the now celebrated novelist, George Meredith.

After this event Meredith lived for some time at Weybridge, not far off Lower Halliford, where Peacock was then residing.

It has been claimed that the literary style of his early works plainly shows the influence of the erstwhile father-in-law. The absence of plot and deficiency in character sketching are two points which are used to illustrate this, while the idea of interspersing the first novel—*The Shaving of Shagpat*—with lyrics based upon old English ballads, like those in *Maid Marian*, has been said to have originated from the same source.

Meredith contributed some poems to *Fraser's Magazine* in 1851, the year before Peacock's *Horæ Dramaticæ* began to appear in its pages. This journal also contained in the same year Charles Kingsley's criticism of Meredith's first volume of poems, which had been dedicated to Peacock:—

To

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK, ESQ.,

This volume

is dedicated with the profound admiration and affectionate respect of his son-in-law.

*Weybridge, May, 1851.**

* Garnett, Saintsbury, and the other writers who have edited or criticised Peacock's works, have omitted all reference to this relationship between the

Among the number of newly-acquired friends at the India House are to be mentioned the two Mills; Horace Grant, the author of numerous school books; and Colonel Prideaux, whose name is still known to English law students through his *Precedents in Conveyancing*, of which the last edition appeared as recently as 1902. Whether Peacock stood on intimate terms with Charles Lamb, who was at this time also there, is not definitely known.

In 1826, however, began a most cordial and important friendship. Mr. Henry Cole became acquainted with Peacock, who introduced him to his fellow-examiner of correspondence, John Stuart Mill. The future editor of Peacock's collective works tells us in his autobiography that he was subsequently in the habit of calling once a week at the India Office for the purpose of conversation, "walking to and fro with Mr. Peacock or John Mill, as the case might be."*

About this time Peacock, who may be said in his teaching and practice to have been a bundle of inconsistencies, became a frequent contributor to the very periodical literature which he always did his best to ridicule and abuse. Unfortunately his activity in this capacity has been nearly overlooked, for neither have his articles been sought out and collected, nor, except for a casual remark here and there, any notice taken of them.† This is to be regretted, since if it had been otherwise,

two novelists. This is due to their having mostly relied for their information about Peacock's life upon Mrs. Clarke—the only child of Lieutenant Nicolls and the subsequent Mrs. George Meredith—who has made no allusion whatever to her stepfather in the biographical sketch of her grandfather's career.

* See *Fifty Years of Public Work*, by Sir Henry Cole, K.C.B., London, 1884, vol. i., p. 5.

† This does not naturally apply to *The Four Ages of Poetry*, *Hours Dramaticæ*, and *Memoir and Letters of Shelley*, which are reprinted in Cole's edition. Most of Peacock's other articles are mentioned by name in a letter

many of the mistakes as to their author's actual opinions, which have been made by those who were only acquainted with the novels, would never have arisen.

Many of them appeared in the *Westminster Review*. This journal was started under the patronage of Jeremy Bentham, with the aid of the two Mills in 1824, and it is most probable that one of these gentlemen secured Peacock's services for it. Still it is possible that this may have been done by one of the other contributors, with whom he was then, or later on, also on friendly terms, such as W. J. Fox, J. A. Roebuck, George Grote, Jefferson Hogg, or Sir John Bowring. At any rate we know that after Sir John Molesworth had bought the of his to a Mr. L'Estrange in Cole's *Biographical Notes*. The following list is derived from this and other sources. Those reproduced in Cole's 1875 edition are not included:—

1822. *The Poetry of Nonnus* in *The London Magazine* (October, pp. 336-339).

1827. Article on Thomas Moore's *Epicurean* in the *Westminster Review* (pp. 351-384).

1830. Articles on Thomas Moore's *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* in the *Westminster Review*, April (pp. 269-304). Article on *Memoirs, Correspondence, and Private Papers of Thomas Jefferson, late President of the United States* in the *Westminster Review*, October (pp. 312-335). Also in the same number one on *Chronicles of London Bridge* (pp. 401-415).

1834. Article on *Musical Reminiscences*, containing an account of the Italian Opera in England from 1773, by the Earl of Mount Edgecumbe, in the *London and Westminster Review*, April to July (pp. 173-187).

1835-6. July to January. Article on *French Comic Romances* in the *London and Westminster Review* (pp. 69-84). In the same number one on *Bellini* (pp. 467-480). The same number also contains an article undoubtedly written by Peacock on *The Epicier: Physiology of the French* (pp. 355-366), founded on a critique in the *Revue Encyclopédique, Etudes Politiques sur l'Epicier*. As this article has been up till now absolutely unmentioned as one of Peacock's, the reasons for its being so may be given (1) The subject is a congenial and therefore likely one for him, and the article is entirely written in his style. (2) It has the same *nom de plume*, M. S. O., attached to it that the two other articles in the same number of the *London and Westminster* bear, and under which his *Horæ Dramaticæ* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*. (3) It contains the same promise to write an article on Paul de Kock that

paper in 1834 it was the younger Mill who persuaded him to continue his assistance.*

To deal with these forgotten magazine contributions is without the scope of the present enquiry, and they have therefore only been occasionally made use of for the purpose of explaining Peacock's views as contained in his novels.

Allusion may, however, be here made to two of them on account of the amusing sequel that ensued from their publication.

Included in the *Westminster Review* for 1827 was a critique of Peacock's on Thomas Moore's *Epicurean*. The reviewer shows that the character of the Epicurean as portrayed by Moore was everything that an Epicurean was not, by pointing out, for instance, the absurdity of

Peacock had made in two other articles in the same journal, and which, although thus thrice made in its pages, he never fulfilled.

1849. Article on *Indian Epic Poetry* in the *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review*, October to January number.

1858. Article on *Chapelle and Bachaumont* in *Fraser's Magazine*, April (pp. 502-511). Article on *Demetrius Galanus*, Greek translations from the Sanskrit in *Fraser's Magazine*, November (pp. 596-608).

1859. Article on *Müller and Donaldson's History of Greek Literature* in *Fraser's Magazine*, March (pp. 357-377).

Finally a long article on *Steam Navigation* in the *Edinburgh Review* (1835) may be mentioned. This has been claimed for Peacock by Garnett. If this should be the case, it is certainly the most glaring example that can be possibly adduced for Peacock's inconsistency. That he should, immediately after his scathing remarks on the *Edinburgh Review* in *Crotchet Castle*, have contributed to it is, however, improbable; and it also unlikely that the man who laughed at Southey for writing the reviews of his own poems, would show such a want of modesty and good taste as to favourably criticise the very evidence he had himself just given before a private committee of the House of Commons. Since the whole article is written in anything but Peacock's style, and the references to him made in it decidedly speak against his being the author, it would be at least interesting to know upon what grounds Garnett has attributed it to him.

* See letter of John Stuart Mill to Albany Fonblanque in *Memoir of Albany Fonblanque*, London, 1874, p. 39.

the author sending his hero in quest of immortality, as the result of a wonderful dream, because the Epicureans did not believe in the former any more than they did in the verity of the latter. A man—like Moore's character—who is terrified by a mummy and awed by a skeleton, was not Peacock's conception of a typical Epicurean, if indeed it was anyone else's. He writes further of Moore "aiming at popularity," and adds, "Every page, every sentence, is written manifestly 'ad captandum.' We always see the actor with his eye on the audience," a remark which gives a real insight into Moore's character to anyone not already acquainted with it. Peacock's next article in the *Westminster* was also directed against Moore, being a censorious criticism of this poet's *Life of Byron*. It contained so many sarcastic allusions to the author of *Lalla Rookh*, that the latter became exasperated. Not knowing who its anonymous author was, he published in the *Times* a poem called the *Ghost of Miltiades*, which was a bitter attack on the editor, Sir John Bowring, for having inserted the article in his magazine. He also attempted to provoke Bowring to a duel by asserting that the latter had invited him up to his house with the intention of firing at him. Bowring appears to have at last succeeded in pacifying him.* A second article of Peacock's on the *Life of Byron*—that which enraged Moore was confined to the first volume of his biography—did not appear in the *Westminster*, as Peacock had promised its readers it should, and the next notice taken of Moore by it took the form of an appreciative review of his *Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*.

Another paper to which Peacock became an occasional contributor, chiefly in the rôle of a musical and operatic critic, was the *Examiner*, which Leigh Hunt and his

* See *Autobiographical Recollections of Sir John Bowring*, by Lewin B. Bowring, London, 1877, p. 351.

brother started in 1808, and to which Shelley contributed his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*.

Of more importance were his short contributions to the *Globe and Traveller*, which was then under the guidance of Walter Coulson, a former amanuensis of Jeremy Bentham. It was upon Coulson's initiative that Barham wrote his parody on Sir Thomas Moore's death, and that both this poet and Peacock became associated with his journal, which the former has called "the most able paper of the day." * The most notable contribution of Peacock was the poem *Rich and Poor: or Saint or Sinner*, which appeared under the signature of Peter Peppercorn, M.D., which was also the pseudonym attached to the above-mentioned parody of the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*. The result was that the poem was claimed by the *Ratepayer* and other magazines as a work of Barham, until its appearance in the *Paper Money Lyrics* † definitely cleared up the mystery. ‡ Towards the close of his life Peacock wrote principally for *Fraser's Magazine*, to which, among other articles, he contributed the already mentioned to *Horæ Dramaticæ* in 1852-7.

Yet though he had time now and then to contribute to periodical literature, his share, before he gave up his employment at the Leadenhall Street Office, was a most modest one. This change, which precluded any possibility

* See *Life and Letters of the Rev. R. H. Barham*, London, 1870, vol. ii., p. 205.

† The *Paper Money Lyrics* were written during the financial panic of 1825. Peacock's objection to paper money was probably accentuated by a succession of articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, written by some of the leading economists of the day in favour of a well-regulated paper system.

‡ See *Notes and Queries*, third series, vol. xii., pp. 79, 155, 171, 277, and 316. This poem is reprinted in the report of a speech delivered by Sir H. Cole at the Liverpool Institute in 1875 (see Cole's *Fifty Years of Public Work*, 1884, vol. ii., p. 361).

of his devoting any great amount of time to literary work, occurred in 1836, the same year that witnessed the appointment of the orientalist, H. Hayman Wilson, to the position of librarian at the India House.

Peacock was promoted Chief Examiner of Correspondence in succession to James Mill, and retained this onerous post twenty years, when he relinquished it in favour of his predecessor's distinguished son, John Stuart. As the government of India was in those days vested in the Company, its directors had an immense responsibility upon their shoulders, since the Board of Commissioners, nominated by the Crown, under whose supervision they themselves stood, did little to control their actions in any way. Peacock was now the first official under them, and therefore enabled to play no insignificant part in the home administration of India.

He began to display a great interest for nautical matters, and to vigorously further plans, from the realisation of which the entire world has derived great benefit, although his name is no longer heard of in connection with them.

One of the first pioneers of the overland route to India, he did his best to overcome the prejudices of his Board of Directors against it, and after this was accomplished strenuously assisted in bringing about many of the important results that accrued. At first interested in the establishment of a connection between Cairo and Suez by caravan, and subsequently by railway, he became later on an advocate for the introduction of a regular steam communication between London and Alexandria on the one side of Egypt, and Suez and Bombay on the other. After the "mail service" of the East India Company had been suspended in 1840 and superseded by the "Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company," he took a great interest in the latter's

development, as indeed in the whole movement which culminated in the construction of the Suez Canal.

While on a political mission to Egypt in 1829, General Chesney consulted a document drawn up by Peacock dealing with this question of the overland route to India. His application to the Government for permission to consider the several routes was the outcome of its perusal. This having been granted, there followed his extensive investigations, among which the famous Euphrates Expedition was the most notable. A memoir of this undertaking was afterwards published by him at Peacock's request.

M. de Lesseps has called Chesney "the father of the Suez Canal," because he was induced to undertake his own great engineering feat on account of his plans, which showed the practicability of carrying through a scheme that the French surveyors had already abandoned as impossible. As Chesney, according to his own admission, first grappled with the whole subject through Peacock's agency, the latter is thus indirectly associated with the origin of the greatest commercial and engineering enterprise of the last century.*

Especially interesting is his advocacy at one time of the Euphrates route. Chesney, who had many consultations with him on the subject, "found that he was deeply versed in the ancient history of the Euphrates, and that he had not only been the first to bring this line of communication with India forward, but that he had collected in a thick book every private notice he could

* See General Francis Rawdon Chesney's *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, London, 1868, pp. 4, 5, 143, 148, &c. Peacock's document, which Chesney consulted, and of which he writes:—"for its comprehensiveness, sagacity, and forethought deserves to be known," is printed on pp. 4 and 5. It consists of a set of queries as to the best line of communication with India, was framed by Peacock, and sent out to Egypt by Lord Aberdeen. See also *Life of General Chesney*, London, 1893, p. 193.

find of that river, whether contained in Gibbon, Balbi, or any other work.* Peacock utilised this knowledge in his evidence before different committees of the House of Commons, and much about his character and opinions can be gleaned by consulting it.

The classical scholar deals with the ancient navigation of the Euphrates, and refers to Herodotus and Ammianus Marcellinus in support of his contention, and points out that Gibbon, in claiming the Emperor Trajan's expedition to have gone down the Tigris, was misled by an article of Monsieur Freret, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des*

* See *Life of Chesney*, p. 261. The later advocates of the Euphrates line, thus first brought into notice by Peacock, numbered Sir Robert Inglis, General Sir Willoughby Gordon, Sir John Barrow, Lord Hill, and Lord Palmerston. Peacock was one of the principal witnesses before three private committees of the House of Commons. In 1832 he supplied the East India Finance Committee with the particulars of the voyage of the "Enterprise" to the Cape of Good Hope. He was the first witness, General Chesney was the second, and Mr. Mc Gregor Laird was also examined before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Steam Navigation to India, under the presidency of the Right Hon. Charles Grant in 1834. He gave evidence on this occasion as to re-opening the Canal from Suez to the Mediterranean, and information as to the French survey which had been made. He proposed the Government navigating the Red Sea with steam vessels at an estimated annual cost of £100,000. The evidence is contained in the Report and Minutes of the Committee, pp. 1-12 and 95. He laid the following papers before this committee. They are mostly from his own pen, and are printed in the Appendix to the Report. Memorandum respecting the application of steam navigation to the internal and external communications of India, dated in September, 1829; another Memorandum on the same subject, dated in December, 1833; Extracts respecting the Euphrates, the Orentes, and Bagdad; Extracts respecting the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf; an Account of the ancient Canal from the Nile to the Red Sea; a Paper intitulated, Reasons for preferring the Euphrates; a Log of Dutch West India Steamer. He was further one of three witnesses before a special committee of the House of Commons, under the chairmanship of Lord William Bentinck, in 1837. His evidence is to be found in the Minutes, pp. 38-61. He handed in before this committee a table of the relative distances of the various routes to India, which was read, and also included in the Report.

Inscriptions. And the disbeliever in many of the methods of "modern civilization" repeatedly asserts the moral and domestic happiness of the natives of India to have been endangered by increased contact with Europeans.

Very instructive is a view emphasized by him as to the advisability of opening up the Euphrates, in order to counteract Russia. He already foresaw the policy of Lord Beaconsfield that a consolidated Turkey was the best means of preventing Russian aggression:—"The first thing the Russians do when they get possession of or connection with any country is to exclude all other nations from navigating its waters. I think, therefore, it is of great importance that we should get prior importance of this river." Question: "Do you think it desirable that the whole of the countries in the line from Scanderoon to Bussorah should be under Turkish government?" Answer: "I think it would be very desirable, for it would preserve the peace of the river, and get up a power which it would be difficult for Russia to oppose."

But not only was Peacock interested in the routes of communication with India, but also in the means of transit. He recommended St. Helena as a station for steamers going round the Cape of Good Hope, and was an authority upon the question of the price and consumption of coals for shipping purposes.

A friendship with John Laird and his more celebrated brother McGreger helped to awaken and develop his passion for navigation. One of the vessels constructed by their firm for the East India Company failed in 1838 to steam against the south-west monsoons in the Indian Ocean. Peacock wrote two letters to the *Times*, showing that the undertaking upon which the "Semiramis" had embarked was not impracticable as had been asserted, but that the failure was simply due

to deficiency of fuel, a statement which the course of subsequent events confirmed:—"The 'Semiramis,' on her outward voyage, went right ahead against the south-east trade wind. She then cleared away one bugbear of steam navigation, and I am still of opinion that if she had had a depôt near Guadafui she would have cleared away another." *

Peacock facilitated the carrying out of his schemes not merely by advocating them. He helped to design the iron steamers, which first doubled the Cape of Good Hope on the way to India, and took an active part in the addition of some steam vessels to the Bombay Marine.

So efficient was his knowledge on steam navigation that he was frequently consulted by experts, and implicit confidence placed in him by the Directors at the India House in this and other matters.

These entrusted him, for example, with the great responsibility of looking after their case against James Silk Buckingham. Before the Special Committee of the House of Commons, which met under the chairmanship of Edward Pendarvis in 1834 to consider it, Peacock and the ex-editor of the *Calcutta Journal* were the only witnesses examined. Buckingham lost the day, and it was not till some years after that the East India Company, which had been mainly instrumental in suppressing the paper, awarded him compensation for his loss in the form of an annual pension.

Two years later Peacock again rendered his employers a good service before another committee of the House of Commons, which had been appointed to consider the question of trade in salt.†

* See the *Times* for November 3rd and 7th, 1838.

† The importance of salt at that time can be best illustrated by the fact that a large part of the Indian inland revenue was derived from a tax on it. The above-mentioned committee met in 1836 under the presidency of Mr.

Through the discharge of these and other official duties he got to know many of the leading men of the day. With one of them he formed an ardent friendship. Sir John Cam Hobhouse was one of his Directors and for a short time Chairman of the Board of Control. He had also been a member of the 1837 Committee on Steam Navigation, before which Peacock was a witness. After the latter had retired from public life, and the former had left the House of Commons on being raised to the peerage as Lord Broughton, the interchange of letters and visits was continued.

It was at his residence in Erle Stoke, Westbury, that Byron's companion introduced Shelley's friend to Thackeray. In a letter describing the house party the author of *Vanity Fair* fortunately did not forget Peacock. He calls him "a charming lyrical poet and Horatian satirist: he was when a writer; now he is a white-headed, jolly old worldling, and Secretary to the East India House, full of information about India and everything else in the world."* This acquaintance was renewed, and Thackeray promised to visit Lower Halliford, where Peacock during the later part of his life resided, but does not appear to have ever done so. He always expressed a great

Wilbraham. Although many other witnesses were examined, Peacock's evidence takes up nearly half the Minutes of the Proceedings (pp. 67-126 and 134). He delivered into the committee numerous papers, of which, however, only one can claim him as its author. This paper on *Charges of Collection*, and the others, are printed in the Appendix to the Report (pp. 213-215). It may be here mentioned that Peacock's evidence in the Buckingham case is included in the corresponding Minutes of Evidence (pp. 85-122), and the papers submitted by him on this occasion to the committee in their Appendix (pp. 110-142). Also that his evidence before the Select Committee on Finance and Accounts, held under the presidency of Thomas Hyde Villiers in 1831-2, can be found in the thereto belonging Minutes of Evidence (pp. 119-130).

* See letter addressed to Mrs. W. Brookfield in *A Collection of Letters of W. M. Thackeray*, 1847-1855, London, 1877, p. 100.

admiration, not only for Peacock, but also for his writings, which is not to be wondered at since they are so like his own. He has praised the lyrics, and perhaps used one of them, *Love and Age*, as a model for his own *Forty Years*.

Among the friends who broke the monotony of Peacock's last quiet and secluded home were John Buchanan, George Meredith, Mr. Thomas Arnold, and a Mr. Howes of the Adjutant-General's Office.

The last ten years of his life were spent in learning Spanish and other literary pursuits.*

So complete was his retirement, and so entirely was he forgotten, that upon his death in 1866 scarcely an obituary notice appeared in the leading papers. Almost neglected by his contemporaries, passed away a man in whom at last some interest is being taken. He was laid to rest in Shepperton, near—as his grand-daughter has appropriately said—"the river which he loved so dearly, on the banks of which almost his whole life was passed."

* Apart from Peacock's contributions to *Fraser's Magazine*, his most important production out of this time is a translation of *Gl' Ingannati*, called *The Deceived*, published by Chapman and Hall, who were also entrusted by Peacock's son-in-law, George Meredith, with the publication of some of his early efforts. This play is interesting, as it possibly influenced Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, while it contains a similar story to that of Canzotte's *Diable Amoureux*, and through this of one of the most important incidents in Lewis' *Monk*.

"HEADLONG HALL."

Peacock's first novel appears to have been published at the beginning of January, 1816, although the first edition has 1815 on the title page.*

It has been claimed for it that it is written in the style of Marmontel, and there can be little doubt that it exhibits the same light and graceful style of the French School of Novelists, to whom this author belongs, and of which Peacock was always an ardent admirer. This interest for French novels on his part is sufficiently shown by his articles on "Chapelle and Bachaumont" and "L'Epicier" in the pages of *Fraser's Magazine* and *Westminster Review*.

Writers who made all sorts of playful and satirical remarks about anything and everything, and who went through life very much as he did "rolling with the world, and laughing with it, and at it as it rolled,"† naturally appealed to him; but a great influence of theirs on his own works is not to be detected. The

* *Headlong Hall* passed through three editions. It was published together with *Nightmare Abbey*, *Maid Marian*, and *Crotchet Castle* in 1837, as novels, in the four editions of his works, edited respectively by Colburn, vol. lvii. of the "Standard Novels," and included, like all Peacock's other works, by Garnett, Saintsbury, and George Newnes, Limited. It has also been issued in New York, together with *Nightmare Abbey*, as No. 2 of the *Knickerbocker Nuggets* in 1887. Of the other novels, *Crotchet Castle* has been separately published as vol. lvii. of "Cassell's National Library." The songs from the novels have been issued separately by Brimley Johnson, London, 1902.

† See Peacock's article in *Fraser's Magazine*, April, 1858, pp. 502-511.

same animated style, exuberant mirth, smart conversation, and cynical remarks are indeed all to be found in *Headlong Hall*; but the subject-matter is quite different from that of Chapelle and Bachaumont, or any of their imitators such as La Fontaine or Voltaire.

Headlong Hall is more of a sketch than a novel, and is so deficient in plot that this could almost be dispensed with altogether.

In the series of loosely-connected dialogues of which it consists, the author satirizes the various crazes and fads of his time. This is done by the advocates of the respective systems meeting at Headlong Hall, the residence of a jovial Welsh squire, who hopes by coming into contact with them to improve his mind.

Peacock's tendency to indulge in good living, and his delight in describing others who do the same, is already evident here, for the squire's chief interest in the novel, in spite of his lofty aspirations, seems to be mainly "pushing" the bottle round, while that of Dr. Gaster, the first of the many clergymen who figure in the Peacockian novels, is that of emptying it.

There is, too, the same satirical vein running through that is a so conspicuous feature in all the later novels. The advocate of vegetarianism keeps helping himself to slices of beef;* Dr. Gaster, while speaking of the superiority of milk and honey to the juice of the grape, drinks large quantities of burgundy; and Mr. Escot, who believes that it is impossible to do any good act,

* The introduction of the question of vegetarianism plays apparently upon Shelley's habit of abstaining from eating animal food. The latter had been greatly impressed by Newton's essay, *Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Régime*, London, 1811, and had himself separately published a booklet, now extremely rare, *A Vindication of Natural Diet*, the contents of which were also included by him in *Queen Mab* as one of a series of notes. It is interesting to note that Mr. Escot, and not Mr. Foster, is the advocate of vegetarianism in Peacock's novel.

is the means of rescuing Mr. Cranium from a watery grave.

It has been claimed that Peacock's characters are less human beings than abstractions of numerous intellectual eccentricities.* Certainly, true is the statement with reference to *Headlong Hall*, for here the interest is chiefly centred round the opinions expressed, which are all more or less extravagant, rather than their exponents. Mr. Foster the perfectibilian, Mr. Escot the deteriorationist, and Mr. Jenkinson the *statu quo ite*, are all vaguely sketched, and it is indeed only from their views, since there is practically no plot, that we are able to conjecture their characters.

It seems to the writer of the present paper that the gist of the novel is probably the outcome of its author's intercourse with Shelley during the year 1815, in the course of which it was written. If Peacock did not exercise any perceptible influence on Shelley's *Alastor*, which was being written at the same time, with the exception of supplying its author with a name for it,† it by no means follows that Peacock's work indicates no trace of Shelley's mind, even though there is no direct reference to him in it. We know that Peacock about this time was in the habit of having animated discussions with his friend. Trelawney mentions his reading the

* See Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature*, New York, vol. xix., p. 11,223.

† The critics seem formerly to have altogether mistaken the meaning of the title given by Peacock to Shelley's poem. The word 'Ἀλαστωρ' means an evil genius, and not the hero as has been so often assumed, but the Spirit of Solitude is the evil genius of the poem. See Peacock's *Memoirs of Shelley*, and note to Robert Buchanan's article on Peacock in *A Poet's Sketch Book*, London, 1883, p. 108. These personal reminiscences were first published in the *New Quarterly Magazine*, vol. iv., and subsequently in Littel's *Living Age*, Boston, vol. cxxvi. They were reprinted by Buchanan not only in the above-mentioned *Poet's Sketch Book*, but also in his *A Look Round Literature*, London, 1887.

same books as Shelley, and having drawn entirely different conclusions from them, with the result that protracted conversation ensued which delighted Shelley, "for he was imperturbable in argument."

As Harriet Shelley at the end of her life had no sympathy for her husband's literary pursuits, but laughed at the votaries of revolution, so we are informed by Medwin of her admirer Peacock having laughed at Shelley's projects for the regeneration of society and his unworldly simplicity and enthusiasm.* The idea of the perfectibility of mankind, as taught by Condorcet, and particularly advocated by William Godwin in the *Political Justice* and *Enquirer*, was as much an integral part of Shelley's creed as of that of Mr. Foster. He had resolved, according to his own words, through reading *Political Justice*, "that justice should be his sole guide in life, and determined to regulate his own deeds by the exactest justice without considering the opinions of others." They both had minds eminently philosophical which delighted to dwell among and follow out abstract principles, but also to enquire occasionally after practical results. The word "perfectible" was by both of them, as by Mr. Foster, misapplied, it being employed to express the faculty of attaining perpetual improvement that is not as capable but incapable of attaining perfection.†

The abortive attempt to redress the state of affairs in Ireland on Shelley's part, to mention only one of his many projects to promote the eternal and temporal happiness of his fellow men, was the outcome of this movement.

That these were his views can at once be gleaned

* See Trelawny's *Records of Shelley; Byron and the Author*, London, 1887, pp. 160, 161.

† See Godwin's *Political Justice*, chap. v.

by consulting his correspondence with Godwin, and that the above represents Peacock's conception of them is clearly proved by his portraiture of Shelley in *Nightmare Abbey* as Mr. Scythrop, who is consumed with "the passion for reforming the world."

During the year 1815 Shelley and Peacock must again and again have discussed the question which so absorbed the former, and which was regarded by the latter with a certain amount of scepticism and indifference.

The poet, Robert Buchanan, tells us in his personal reminiscences of Peacock that "the pessimism of his books was also the daily theme of his talk,"* so it is only natural to conclude that he was loth to agree with his young friend's utopian schemes. Even if he had, like him, lost all reverence for many social institutions, he could never be guiled by enthusiastic and what he thought to be delusive visions of a perfectibility that could never be realised. Peacock's sound and practical common sense looked at these ideals as the outcome of the feverish and unsettled time in which he lived, and enabled him to see what Shelley never could, namely, that most of the agitators who were so anxious to ameliorate the condition of mankind were in truth using this pretext as a means of improving their own. Like Mr. Escot, Peacock was never at any period of his life a genuine reformer, even if he later on became a contributor to *The Westminster Review*, and thus identified himself with a journal which was conducted by men who really were. He had an utter disbelief in all the coming milleniums of justice and freedom, which were then being so frequently proclaimed. He stood to Shelley in the same relation as the two principal characters in *Headlong Hall* stand to one another—he

* See Buchanan's *Poet's Sketch Book*, p. 102.

was as much a pessimist as the other an optimist. He was distrustful of the present, regretful of the past, and despondent for the future. This difference between the ideas of Messrs. Escot and Foster, or those of Peacock and Shelley, has been admirably expressed by the former in the memoir of his friend, which he concludes, after having paid a glowing tribute to Shelley's abilities by deploring his "want of reality." "It would have given to his poetry the only element of truth which it wanted; though at the same time the more clear development of what men were would have lowered his estimate of what they might be, and dimmed his enthusiastic prospect of the future destiny of the world. I can conceive him, if he had lived to the present time, passing his days like Volney, looking on the world from his windows without taking part in its turmoils; and perhaps like the same, or some other great apostle of liberty, desiring that nothing should be inscribed on his tomb but his name, the dates of his birth and death, and the single word 'Désillusionné.'"

The following utterance of Mr. Escot is Peacock's own testimony:—"Energy—independence—individuality—disinterested virtue—active benevolence—self oblivion—universal philanthropy—these are the qualities I desire to find, and of which I contend that every succeeding age produces fewer examples."

Another saying that can be quoted to illustrate the same point is interesting, not only because it reiterates the main idea of the former one, but also because it contains an idea which its author was to develop and incorporate in the person of Sir Oran Haut-ton of his next novel. It is the great idea that had been popularised by Rousseau, and to which Peacock during the whole of his life tenaciously clung. "Give me the wild man of the woods; the original, unthinking, unscientific, unlogical

savage: in him there is at least some good; but in a civilized, sophisticated, cold-blooded, mechanical, calculating slave of Mammon and the world, there is none—absolutely none."

Not only in their contempt for modern civilization are their opinions identical; but Mr. Escot is also incidentally the mouthpiece of views on other questions which exactly coincide with those of Peacock, as for instance his hatred of periodical literature, or the following estimate of literary people in general:—"The understanding of literary people is for the most part exalted, as you express it, not so much by the love of truth and virtue, as by arrogance and self-sufficiency; and there is, perhaps, less disinterestedness, less liberality, less general benevolence, and more envy, hatred and uncharitableness among them than among any other description of men." It is this dislike of literary people on Peacock's part that accounts for the fact that he associated with so few of his literary contemporaries, and which has brought with it the result that we know so little about him.

If then this supposition should be accurate, that the opinions of Messrs. Foster and Escot are in reality those of Shelley and Peacock, Mr. Jenkinson, the *statu quo ite*, could very well be Jefferson Hogg—Shelley's biographer—who used to accompany the two friends on many of their rambles, and who may be supposed, from what we know of him, to have taken up in the discussions a neutral position.

With *Headlong Hall* thus begins the long list of caricatures, which form such a prominent feature of all its author's novels, although they do not at once possess the clearness which later on characterizes them.

A character that is no direct caricature of any one person, but rather of a system common to many is that

of Mr. Cranium. His introduction into the novel is evidently an attempt on Peacock's part to expose the absurdities of phrenology, or craniological physiognomy as it was then usually called, which had attained such prominence and success in the hands of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim. One of the most amusing passages in the whole book is Mr. Cranium's advice to parents, which consists in recommending them to compare their sons' skulls with those of animals, when they want to decide upon their future calling or profession. It may here follow as a specimen of Peacock's satire: "If the development of the organ of destruction point out a similarity between the youth and the tiger, let him be brought to some profession (whether that of a butcher, a soldier, or a physician, may be regulated by circumstances) in which he may be furnished with a licence to kill, as without such licence, the indulgence of his natural propensity may lead to the untimely rescission of his vital thread, 'with edge of penny cord and vile reproach.' If he show an analogy with the jackal, let all possible influence be used to procure him a place at court, where he will infallibly thrive. If his skull bears a marked resemblance to that of a magpie, it cannot be doubted that he will prove an admirable lawyer; and if with this advantageous conformation be combined any similitude to that of an owl, very confident hopes may be formed of his becoming a judge." It is such innocent raillery—and this can be said of much of Peacock's satire—that is very often a more effectual means of invalidating arguments than the most cogent reasons which can possibly be adduced.

A personage who has been regarded as the easiest to identify is the landscape gardener, Mr. Milestone. Garnett asserts that Payne Knight must be meant, and Saintsbury writes, "Except Knight as Mr. Milestone no

actual person is very definitely made a butt of." The reason given by Garnett in support of his claim is quite wrong, as he states that, "notwithstanding the apparent praise of Payne Knight (*i.e.*, Peacock's), the views satirized in the character of Milestone appear to be his,"—exactly which they do not. "The system of levelling, and training, and clipping, and docking, and clumping, and polishing, and cropping, and shaving," to which Mr. Milestone has to plead guilty in the eyes of Sir Patrick O'Prism, is also that against which Payne Knight's didactic poem—*The Landscape*—is directed, for does not Mathias say that the pith of its author's views on landscape gardening are, that—

"Grounds by neglect improve
And banish use, for naked nature's love." *

Mr. Milestone makes a distinction between the picturesque and the beautiful, exactly what Payne Knight was never prepared to do, so much so that his friend Price, who agreed with him on most other points, compiled a book of over two hundred pages to convince him of it. The very name Milestone—if Payne Knight were meant—would be a misnomer. This gentleman, in the preface to *The Landscape*, laughed at Humphrey Repton for having advised placing the family arms on the mile-stones within an estate in order to "improve" it, and Peacock's note, in which allusion is made to this incident, shows that the latter thoroughly approved of the satire, which Garnett has also admitted. Why then did Peacock, if he wished to satirize Payne Knight, choose the name of "Milestone" for him?

This mistaken idea about Payne Knight has probably arisen from the fact—although no reference has been made to it—that Peacock made considerable use of his

* See *Pursuits of Literature*, second dialogue, 49.

above-mentioned poem. This consists of three books, and is written with the intention of attacking "a system of public embellishment so lucrative to those who make a trade of it,"* and is directed specially against Mason, Brown, and Repton. In the first book an account is given of an estate before and after it has been "modernized" and "improved," which is illustrated by two plates that are exactly the same as the two plans of Lord Littlebrains' park shown by Mr. Milestone to the Misses Chromatic. In both cases the one represents a brook flowing in its natural banks, and the other showing the same brook after its banks have been dressed by an "improver." In the last two books Payne Knight vigorously attacks the system he has described in the first, as the following lines—to select a few from the many that could be quoted—sufficiently show:—

"Oft when I've seen some lonely mansion stand
Fresh from the 'improver's' desolating hand,
Midst shaven lawns, that far around it creep
In one eternal undulating sweep;
And scatter'd clumps, that nod at one another,
Each stiffly waving at its formal brother;
Tir'd with the extensive scene so dull and bare,
To Heaven devoutly I've addressed my pray'r," etc.†

and so the whole way through.

By Peacock it is similar, Mr. Milestone's system is only described to be ridiculed. The attempt to convert the rocks of Llanberris into a picturesque landscape garden proves no success and culminates with an explosion, in which a rock is blown to bits, and the worthy Mr. Cranium precipitated from the summit of a neighbouring tower into the lake below. It can be seen that Payne Knight's verses and Peacock's shafts of

* See preface of the second edition.

† See the opening verses of Book II.

ridicule are directed at the same object, and that the latter did not intend to satirize opinions which were identical with his own, but rather those of Brown, Mason, and Repton, to which both he and the author of *The Landscape* were opposed.

Of the other characters, the only one whose identity can be traced with any degree of certainty is that of Mr. Panscope. Garnett thinks that Peacock was here partly thinking of Coleridge, but if this should be so, it is also very probable indeed that Lord Brougham—Peacock's *bête noir*, whom he attacked on nearly every available occasion—is chiefly meant.* The description of Mr. Panscope is indicated by his name, but Peacock has amplified it by calling him "the chemical, botanical, geological, astronomical, mathematical, metaphysical, meteorological, anatomical, physiological, galvanistical, musical, pictorial, bibliographical, critical philosopher, who had run through the circle of the sciences, and understood them all equally well." This humourous and derisive definition is far more applicable to Brougham than to Coleridge, even if the range of the latter's knowledge was most extensive. Mr. Panscope, too, has £10,000 a year, which can scarcely apply to Coleridge, as it is questionable if he ever had much more in the course of his whole life.†

The characters included in the small band of reviewers who all belong to one magazine, "the two very profound critics, Mr. Gall and Mr. Treacle and the two very multitudinous versifiers, Mr. Nightshade and Mr. Mac Laurel," are very hard to identify, Saintsbury being

* See *Contemporary Review*, April, 1875, p. 741.

† The contention that Mr. Panscope may be Coleridge is slightly supported on the other hand by the fact that Peacock introduces him into his next two novels, whereas Lord Brougham first appears—or reappears, as the case may be—in *Crotchet Castle*.

of opinion that the attempts—namely, of Garnett among others—to prove them to be Gifford, Southey, and the rest must be considered as futile.* If Dr. Gall is William Gifford, as Garnett surmises, it is naturally quite feasible to assume, as he does, that Southey is portrayed in Mr. Nightshade, since the latter was a most frequent contributor to the *Quarterly Review*, which was at this time under Gifford's guidance; but "this critical Napoleon," as Dr. Gall is described, can be just as well if not rather meant to be Lord Jeffrey. Certain it is that Peacock in his other works again and again laughs at the *Edinburgh Review*, as it provides him with a good opportunity of exhibiting his supreme contempt for Scotchmen in particular, and his rabid disgust of periodical criticism in general at the same time. He speaks of it on one occasion, without endeavouring to conceal its name as "a shallow and dishonest publication," and maintains that everything in it is "garbled, falsified, distorted, misrepresented" †—a view which quite corresponds with Mr. Escot's opinion of the unnamed journal in *Headlong Hall*. Mr. Mac Laurel, too, with all his strong dialect and talk about "the pheelosophers of Edinbroo," even though his politics be more Tory than Whig, can only with difficulty be imagined as a contributor to Gifford's journal. There are further numerous distinct references to the *Scotch Magazine*, such as Dr. Gall's ideas about unexpectedness as a means of conveying pleasure to the mind, which are exactly similar to those laid down in it,‡ while the

* See Saintsbury's Introduction to *Headlong Hall* in the Macmillan Edition.

† See *Westminster Review*, April, 1830, p. 302.

‡ Compare for instance, Dr. Gall's statement:—"I distinguish the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call unexpectedness!" etc., with "There is a refined degree of novelty, which acts in a lively

same gentleman's general views on taste are very much like those of Lord Jeffrey, contained in an article on the same subject.*

Dr. Gall is therefore most likely not meant to be Gifford, as Peacock would hardly have wished to describe him by putting into his mouth opinions of the *Edinburgh Review*, since the journal of which Gifford was the editor had been started and was being continued for the express purpose of opposing it. What seems most plausible is to conclude that the novelist here will generalize rather than particularize; but if he is to be construed as wishing to do the latter, then he was thinking by all means more about Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review* than of Gifford and the *Quarterly*.†

The other characters in the novel are an accomplished violinist and a dilettante painter, who are probably intended by Peacock for impersonations of two of his contemporaries, but who cannot now be found out. Miss Philomela Poppyseed, the "indefatigable compounder of novels," is a cynical portrait of one of the legion of lady novelists, who at the commencement of the last century began to deluge the country with indifferent and worthless tales. Literary women were at this time not much admired. Charles Lamb complained bitterly of certain of their number, and Peacock in also deprecating them, was but expressing an opinion shared by many of his contemporaries.

manner on the mind, and often, by sympathy, on the nerves; for which we shall venture to coin the name of unexpectedness," etc. (*Edinburgh Review*, January, 1806, p. 310).

* See article on Alison's *Essays and Principles of Taste* (*Edinburgh Review*, May, 1811).

† There is a critique of *Headlong Hall* in the *Critical Review*, January, 1816. The reviewer identifies Gall, Nightshade, etc., with the *Edinburgh Review*, not the *Quarterly*.

In conclusion, attention may be called to a book written in imitation of *Headlong Hall* by an old friend of its author, Sir Edward Strachey, which has recently been published. It is named *Talk at a Country House*, and possesses a second title derived from Goethe, *Fact and Fiction*, which is most aptly chosen, and which would equally well apply to most of Peacock's productions. Strachey's tale has even less right to be called a novel than those of his friend, since there is absolutely no plot, and nearly the whole of the subject-matter consists of discussions between the old Squire and Mr. Foster, both of whom resemble the corresponding characters in *Headlong Hall*, from which they are taken. "But you know Foster already"—says the Squire on introducing this gentleman to the assembled guests at the Old Manor Place—"you have often met him at Headlong Hall. I am glad he has not brought Mr. Escot with him."*

"MELINCOURT."

The tale that Peacock wrote after *Headlong Hall*, and which appeared in 1817, is like its predecessor,

* See Sir Edward Strachey's *Talk at a Country House*, Edinburgh and London, 1895, p. 4. Strachey repeats in the novel Peacock's saying of Mill, when once interrogated as to whether the latter was likely to like what the questioner liked, and hate what he hated. "He will hate what you hate and hate what you like." Peacock's tribute to another as a good hater is singularly appropriate applied to himself, since an analysis of his works shows that they exhibit the defect by which in Goethe's judgment the works of English writers were formerly tainted, namely, "das unangenehme Gefühl von Widerwillen gegen alles" (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, vol. ii., thirteenth book).

devoid of plot, though not to the extent which characterizes Strachey's imitation.

The scene is laid as usual in a country mansion, which naturally suggested itself to the author as the best and likeliest spot to bring together a motley group of individuals, who are here as elsewhere not accurately delineated, but rather instrumentally used to convey certain sets of opinions, all more or less at variance with each other. The jumble of phrases and heterogeneous ideas, associated either by slight and accidental connections, or held together by a thin thread of narrative, practically make up the book.

The author appears in many of these conversations to remain neutral. He derives greater pleasure in throwing the subjects open to discussion, and only occasionally—as in the question of borough reform—becomes a partisan as well as a cynic. But in spite of this the same illiberality towards the enthusiasts of whatever creed they may be, although slightly in abeyance, is also here to be detected. There are, too, the same remarks on poets and critics to which Peacock is so partial. If limited in number they are still very disparaging, and unfortunately exhibit the author often as more intent on displaying his own wit and erudition than inducing a fair appreciation of an author and his work.

Melincourt portrays further the remarkable divergence of opinion as regards the merits and demerits of modern, human, and scientific progress, which had been embodied in *Headlong Hall* in the persons of Messrs. Escot and Foster. It ventilates on the one hand the opinion that the elective franchise should be extended to populous towns against the supporters of rotten boroughs, who regarded the latter as a counterpoise to the baneful effects of democracy, and exhibits on the other hand a pronounced dislike to the altered social circumstances

which were about this time resulting from the introduction of machinery and other progressive changes. In the latter point, as in the former, it truly reflects the views of its author, who as Buchanan states was sick of the cant of so-called modern progress, and "not for one moment prepared to admit that the world was one whit wiser and happier than before the advent of the steam engine."*

But should an examination of the contents show that it deals with some of the burning questions then agitating England, a closer investigation will also reveal that it contains like *Headlong Hall* not only a *résumé* as it were of the attitude taken up in a few instances by Peacock in regard to them, but also of that adopted by Shelley.

In order to prove this it is advisable to consider the circumstances under which it was produced.

A letter addressed to Leigh Hunt, and dated from Marlow, December 8th, 1816, contains the following passage:—"Peacock is the author of *H. H.* He expresses himself much pleased by your approbation—indeed it is approbation which many would be happy to acquire. He is now writing *Melincourt* in the same style, but as I judge far superior to *Headlong Hall*. He is an amiable man of great learning, considerable taste, an enemy to every shape of tyranny and superstitious imposture. I am now on the point of taking the lease of a house among these woods and hills, these sweet green fields, and this delightful river, where, if I should ever have the happiness of seeing you, I will introduce you to Peacock."† It appears from this that Peacock probably began to work at *Melincourt* in the last

* See Littel's *Living Age*, vol. cxxvi., p. 157.

† See *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*, W. R. Nicoll and I. J. Wise, London, 1895, p. 328.

months of 1816, as there is no previous intimation of his being engaged in writing it, and we know that he must have finished it in the early months of the following year, as it was published in the early summer of the same.* The cottage mentioned in the letter had been sought out for Shelley by Peacock, and was situated in West Street, Marlow, in the neighbourhood of the latter's home. Shelley first settled in this residence at the beginning of March, 1817, and as he was Peacock's guest for the four or five months preceding this event, and Peacock was Shelley's most frequent visitor after it had occurred, it follows that the two friends were practically together the whole of the time in which the novel was being written.

This time of literary effort and unrestrained friendship fell in a critical period in English history—a period of great economic changes—in which the ascendancy of British commerce was seriously threatened. Discontent was rampant from one end of the land to the other, caused largely by the National resources having been drained during the great Continental War to such an extent that over £500,000,000 had been added to the Public Debt. The consequent distress was further augmented by innumerable prosecutions for trifling offences and by influential landlords who enacted corn-laws for the improvement of their own rents.

A vivid picture of these circumstances is contained in *Melincourt*, which, like its predecessor, was the result of the constant inter-communication of ideas between Shelley and Peacock, but with a singular difference. The former differences of opinion, so divergent in *Head-*

* The statement that *Melincourt* was first published in 1818, made in Cole's edition (vol. i., p. 77, note) and elsewhere, is quite inaccurate. There is already a critique of it to be found in the *Monthly Review* for July, 1817, as well as in the *British Critic* for the ensuing October.

long Hall as to necessitate their being attributed to two separate characters, are here incorporated in the one person of Mr. Forester, who is not, as has been generally assumed, only a portraiture of Shelley, but also at the same time, in many of its phases, one of Peacock.

He exhibits the views of the school of thought, whose adherents are now known to us under the name of philosophical radicals. He looks upon all questions connected with administrative subjects in their bearing upon the interests of the people and without reference to Whig or Tory objects. He is favourable to popular interests rather than those of either section of the aristocracy, to free thought and right of conscience in matters of belief rather than to any special creed. He takes up in short an attitude animated by the desire expressed in Jeremy Bentham's wish for "the greatest good of the greatest number." His character and opinions show the intention of its originator to use a fictitious tale as a means of teaching the same lesson imparted by Shelley in the *Revolt of Islam* and the political pamphlets of the year of *Melincourt's* publication, which have been described by Buxton Forman as having been written "to awaken the better classes of his countrymen and countrywomen from their apathy, and startle them into a moral and intellectual fermentation calculated to bring about reform in all departments — radical, sweeping, and conclusive.*

Mr. Forester represents Shelley as a philosopher, both Shelley and Peacock as an unbeliever, and also the views of both as a reformer, although, as regards the last respect, his standpoint approaches nearer to that

* See H. Buxton Forman's article, *The Hermit of Marlow*, London, 1887.

of the former than that of the latter.* As far as the question of parliamentary representation is concerned, he undoubtedly takes up a position coinciding with that of both.

In the same year as *Melincourt* appeared, Shelley issued two pamphlets, the one three months before and the other about the same time after its publication—*A proposal for putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom*, and *An Address to the People on the Death of Princess Charlotte*,—both of which contain opinions identical with those of the hero of the novel.

* Peacock was too much of a negative thinker to be called a progressive one in the true and full sense of the word in which it can be applied to Shelley. The result of this has been that the estimate of his political opinions has always resulted in contradiction. He has been regarded as one of the out-and-out Tories, on account of his sharing their well-known tendency of "letting well alone"—an opinion which Lord Houghton has endorsed, although he strangely enough admits him to have been theoretically liberal. Dr. Garnett considers him to have been a nominal Tory, but in reality a progressive radical—an opinion which is correct with the exception that it is quite impossible that Peacock ever identified himself even nominally with the Tory party. The novels—even should some passages support the idea that he did so—do not invariably express his views, as he laughs at, and parodies in them nearly everything that comes along. Here in many cases he holds a brief and puts forward the best arguments for both sides of a dispute, and then leaves the reader to exercise his own judgment. His long connection with the *Westminster Review*, however, implies that he must, during the long period in which he was a contributor, have been anything but a Tory. Any statement to the contrary presupposes his practising deception in bringing his own views into conformity with those of the magazine, and accuses those who managed it—such as the two Mills, who must have known his political views, as they came daily into contact with him,—of having connived at it. It should be remembered that even if Peacock did often oppose modern progress, it was not really the principles upon which it is based, but the mistaken ideas that existed of, and the peculiar methods that were employed to further it. And should his dissatisfaction with many of the schemes for the improvement of the masses be based on the conviction that they were so ill-judged as to generally result in failure, so was his idea of progress radically different from that of most of those

Peacock also held similar opinions, since his whole method of dealing with the subject countenances the idea, and as there is sufficient evidence to the same effect in his other writings. In an article, for instance, on Thomas Jefferson in the *Westminster Review*, written at a time when the Reform agitation had reached its acutest stage, he shows his full appreciation of the author of the *Declaration of Independence*, who successfully strove against the federalists then wishing to introduce the same reactionary measures in America as the radicals in England were endeavouring to remove, and

who in his day were so eagerly clamouring for it. The real difference between Peacock on the one hand and Shelley and Mr. Forester on the other, is that whereas he resembled them in endeavouring to expose formalism and corruption in the State, he was himself seldom ready to propose, embark on or assist in any comprehensive scheme of reform. He refuted illogical arguments, detected contradictions, and carried the conflict with falsehood and absurdity into the field of practical evils, but did not always give the corresponding truth when he had assailed an error, or sketch the means of reform when he had effectually shown the necessity for it. It is not strange that the philosopher he admired most was Plato, who possessed the same power of irony and ridicule, and whom he held unrivalled in bringing into clear light false doctrines, and of whom he said "It is in negation that Plato shines most—in the exposure of the errors of others" (*Fraser's Magazine*, March, 1859, p. 371). But Peacock was himself not quite free from the selfishness with which he reproached others, and was not therefore always qualified to teach in matters in which he himself did not excel. Thackeray—who was one of his admirers and resembled him not only in personal appearance but also in the general style of his works—saw too through the veil of ignorance and self-interest that actuate men in public and private life, and by similar methods strove to help in counteracting their power; but it is very doubtful if he was "the first social regenerator of the day," as Charlotte Brontë has said. Cynicism may be an effectual means of doing good, and the racy humour or solemn irony of such arch-cynics as a Thackeray or a Peacock may make the reader conscious of the faults to which he or others are prone, but the exposure of an error or short-coming has little or no result unless it be at the same time shown along what lines and by what means improvement is to take place. Peacock, too, does not always exhibit a high conception of life, such as, for

favourably compares the elective system of the United States with that at home, which he stigmatises as "a mere contest of nicknames."*

The outline of Mr. Forester's character presents a contrast to the general trend of Peacock's ideas, but corresponds with those of Shelley. Especially as regards his broad and far-reaching views on reform generally, his self-denial and altruistic efforts, he is representative of the poet rather than the novelist. He is like the former in his firm belief in the power of individual example. His saying, "Yet the history of the world abounds with sudden and extraordinary revolutions in the opinions of mankind, which have been affected by single enthusiasts," is indeed characteristic of the poet and reformer, whose enthusiasm was laughed at and ridiculed by his friend.

The account supplied by Mr. Forester of his ideal of womanhood corresponds with that of Shelley, and is particularly interesting, as the latter had, about this time been drawn to Mary Godwin by the same attributes that are here described, and repelled from his first wife by the want of them. Anthelia's conception of a gentleman in the novel is the following:—"I would require him to be free in all his thoughts, true in all his words, generous in all his actions—ardent in friendship, enthusiastic in love, disinterested in both—prompt in the

instance, in his continual exaltation of material over mental happiness. He had great sympathy with the teaching of the Epicurean philosophy, that taught, as he has himself said, "that happiness is the end of life" (*Westminster Review*, October, 1827), and it was upon these principles that he conducted his own—so much so that he sometimes seems to resemble one or many of the clergymen he has portrayed in his own novels, who are either indifferent to, or have only a mechanical belief in the truths they have to teach, and whose greatest pleasure is a good dinner and a bottle of wine.

* See *Westminster Review*, October, 1830, p. 320.

conception, and constant in the execution of benevolent enterprise—the friend of the friendless, the champion of the feeble, the firm opponent of powerful oppression—not to be enervated by luxury, nor corrupted by avarice, nor intimidated by tyranny, nor enthralled by superstition—more desirous to distribute wealth than to possess it, to disseminate liberty than to appropriate power, to cheer the heart of sorrow than to dazzle the eyes of folly.” And it is because Mr. Forester possesses all these qualities in the eyes of the heroine of *Melincourt* that he gains her love:—“I have found you the friend of the poor, the enthusiast of truth, the disinterested cultivator of the rural virtues, the active promoter of the cause of human liberty.”

Such descriptions apply equally well to Shelley as to Mr. Forester, and are the author’s tribute to the uprightness of character possessed by his younger contemporary. Shelley was like Forester, he loved “truth only for itself,” and it was the love of truth for which he sacrificed so much, which distinguishes all his utterances, and with which all his works are impregnated.* That his principles were actuated by a wish for “the diffusion of liberty” is sufficiently revealed in his works, which are, as Goethe claimed for those of Schiller, permeated with the idea of freedom.† Of a similar character was his objection to superstition in every shape and form, at least in the sense in which the word would be construed by a Mr. Forester, which was of a so thorough and intensive nature that he has been brandmarked as an unbeliever, with the result that unworthy attempts have been made by those who found themselves in opposition to him to

* “Let us see the truth, whatever that may be.”—Shelley, 1822.

† The great idea ever uppermost to him was that true happiness is only attainable in perfect freedom.” See Charles Sotheran’s *Shelley as a Philosopher and Reformer*, New York, 1878, p. 6.

vent their grievance by villifying his character. His generosity is indicated by the fact that about this time, and in the two or three years preceding it, he gave Leigh Hunt £1400, allowed Peacock £100 a year, and in the Pamphlet for Reform offered £100 for the furtherance of the principles it upheld, a record all the more significant when it is remembered that these gifts to a friend or for a cause he had at heart were made at a time when he could ill afford them. Medwin, in the memoir of his friend in the *Athenæum* (1832), writes of the latter's life at Marlow:—"He led a quiet, retired, domestic life, and has left behind him a character for benevolence and charity that still endears him to its inhabitants"; and another writer testifies to his solicitude at this time for the wants of the poor:—"His charity, though liberal, was not weak. He enquired personally into the circumstances of petitioners, visited the sick in their beds (for he had gone the round of the hospitals on purpose to be able to practice on occasion), and kept a regular list of industrious poor, whom he assisted with small sums to make up their accounts."* In short, he used his wealth in the same way as Mr. Forester, who "estimated his riches not by the amount of rent his estate produced, but the number of simple and happy beings it maintained."

From this comparison it follows that in the hero of *Melincourt* we have in many points a picture of Shelley as he then was. It should also not be forgotten that some of Mr. Forester's opinions, which might at first sight be looked upon as exclusively a reproduction of those of the author, were shared by Shelley.

The latter was like Peacock—to quote an instance to which allusion has already been made—unable to grasp

* See Memoir prefixed to *Beauties of Shelley*, 1830, p. 9, and stated by the editor to be chiefly obtained from Mrs. Shelley and Leigh Hunt.

the economic changes brought about by the industrial development consequent upon the introduction of machinery. This attitude was, perhaps, in both cases due to Godwin, to whom Shelley at any rate was much indebted for many of his opinions, and who found himself in the same difficulty.

Here and there Mr. Forester exhibits a trait, discloses a habit, or is the exponent of an opinion peculiar to Peacock. One instance of this is his advocacy of the Anti-saccharine League, which is simply the reproduction of an interesting episode in the author's life, since Sir Edward Strachey informs us that Peacock was in the way of not eating sugar or other Colonial produce, for the same reason that induces Mr. Forester to abstain from doing so.

And strange as it may seem, Mr. Forester, who, as we have seen, recalls so many features peculiar to Shelley, and others common to both Shelley and Peacock, is the representative of the deteriorationist views of Mr. Escot of *Headlong Hall*, and thus of opinions held by Peacock, and directly antagonistic to those of his friend. It is this position of Mr. Forester especially that accounts for some literary critics having concluded that Peacock in his person impersonated himself. Others, as a result of it, have been unable to declare for Shelley, in spite of the close resemblance in other points.

For the proof that Mr. Forester is a deteriorationist, his introduction to the reader in the novel may suffice. In response to Sir Telegraph Paxarett, who is astounded at discovering him in some "uncivilized part of the world," he replies in his droll, spirited and unconventional manner, "I am afraid this part of the world does not deserve the compliment implied in the epithet you have bestowed on it. Within no very great distance

from this spot are divers towns, villages, and hamlets, in any of which, if you have money, you can make sure of being cheated, and if you have none, quite sure of being starved—strong evidences of a state of civilization." Anyone acquainted with *Melincourt* will know that nearly all further utterances on the same topic—and they make up no inconsiderable portion of his discourse—are in the same vein.

These would be nothing but a second version of those in *Headlong Hall*, if Peacock had not infused a new element of interest, by the introduction of a *muta persona*, Sir Oran Haut-ton. He is utilised by the novelist as a means of portraying Rousseau's idea of the original man in an exaggerated form, and at the same time to parody the fashionable dandies of the day, whom Peacock has so successfully ridiculed on a second occasion in the person of the Hon. Mr. Listless of his next novel. The method in which the author deals with the original conception of bringing into a novel an ourang outang and allowing it to appear and act as a human being, the knowledge of such laws as that of the influence and tenacity of hereditary forces in the physical world, which the novel displays, are acknowledged by Peacock to be taken from, and are to be traced back to Lord Monboddo, who anticipated some of the laws and theories of modern evolutionary science.

Notwithstanding the author's admission that he derived his ideas from Monboddo, and his trouble of supplying numerous footnotes with extracts from the works, which had influenced his own, numerous attempts have been made to find another origin for the worthy Baronet and M.P. It has been suggested that the picture of an ape which figured on the cover of a magazine, to which Peacock was a contributor as

a boy, may have furnished him with the idea, and Byron was mistaken enough to imagine himself to be responsible for it. Medwin reports his saying, "You know the story of the bear that I brought up for a degree when I was at Trinity There was, by the bye, rather a witty satire founded on my bear. A friend of Shelley's made an ourang outang the hero of a novel, had him created a baronet, and returned for a borough of one vote. I forget the name of the novel" * —a statement which shows Byron's ignorance, not only as to the name but also of the contents of *Melincourt*. It, however, exhibits his acquaintance with Peacock as a writer, and it is interesting to note how he incorrectly suspects Peacock, some four years later, of being responsible for a pamphlet entitled *John Bull's Letter*, which in his opinion was "diabolically well written and full of fun and ferocity." †

No attempt can be here made to compare Peacock's Sir' Oran Haut-ton with the material from which it is derived, such as Monboddo's *Ancient Metaphysics* and *Origin and Progress of Language*, or the works of Buffon and Rousseau, as the copious excerpts from them in Peacock's notes render any such effort superfluous.

Of special interest is the resemblance which this part of *Melincourt* bears to one of Wilhelm Hauff's Märchen, entitled "Der Junge Engländer," to which Garnett has called attention. This short fairy tale is one of the three which secure the release of the slaves by whom they are related to the Sheik of Alexandria. An ourang outang is introduced—for a similar purpose of burlesque

* *Conversation of Lord Byron*. By Thomas Medwin, second edition, p. 91.

† See postscript to a letter of Byron's addressed to Murray, and dated Ravenna, January 29th, 1821. Also letter, Shelley to Peacock, August 10th, 1821.

—into the society of a town called Grünwieseler by a stranger, and instructed in dancing and other accomplishments in the same manner in which Sir Oran Haut-ton is educated and provided for by Mr. Forester. Many of the details are analogous with those in the English precursor, such as the musical propensities of the ape, or the description of its agility in dancing, which irresistibly recalls some of the high leaps of Sir Oran Haut-ton, which so surprise the occupants and guests of Melincourt Castle. As the story appeared some years after *Melincourt*, and corresponds with it on the whole, it seems likely that Hauff may have been influenced by Peacock's novel, although no direct proof to that effect is forthcoming.

Another somewhat ingenious character in *Melincourt* is Mr. Fax, "a tall, thin, pale, grave-looking personage, who is meant to be Malthus, and it is no matter of chance that we are introduced to him in the course of a chapter entirely devoted to the principle of population. This gentleman is further described by the author as "the champion of calm reason, the indefatigable explorer of the cold, clear springs of knowledge, the bearer of the torch of impassionate truth that gives more light than warmth. He looks on the human world, the world of mind, the conflict of interests, the collision of feelings, the infinitely diversified developments of energy and intelligence, as a mathematician looks on diagrams, or a merchant on his wheels and pulleys, as if they were foreign to his own nature and were nothing more than subjects of curious speculation." If only a coincidence, it is worthy of note how Peacock, in the same novel in which he exalts an ape into the position of a man, impersonates the author of the *Essay on Population*, whose ideas suggested to Darwin, according to his own admission, the crucial

point that enabled him to discover the law of natural selection. This introduction of Mr. Fax is only the continuation of a phase of the intellectual question in *Headlong Hall*, for Malthus wrote his celebrated book to convince his own father of the error he had committed in adopting the speculations of Godwin and Condorcet, concerning the perfectibility of man. Godwin, who in this question was supported—as we have already seen—by Shelley and opposed by Peacock, published in 1821 a work “On population, being an enquiry concerning the power of increase in the number of mankind,” which contraverts the deteriorationist views of his able opponent. The great struggle for existence in mankind—which the author of the *Origin of Species* was later on to sketch in application to the animal world—is, in Peacock’s tale, for the first time, from a scientific standpoint, dealt with in the form of a novel. The views of Malthus, who attributed all the defects of modern society to the inherent tendency of the masses to augment in numbers beyond the means of subsistence, are truly reflected. Mr. Fax follows in Malthus’ footsteps in advising the postponement or avoidance of marriage as conducive to a diminution in the numbers of births. “Bachelors and spinsters I decidedly venerate. The world is overstocked with featherless bipeds. More men than corn is a fearful pre-eminence, the sole and fruitful cause of penury, disease, and war, plague, pestilence, and famine,” or “some must marry, that the world may be peopled; many must abstain, that it may not be overstocked. It is better that the world should have a smaller number of peaceable and rational inhabitants, living in universal harmony and social intercourse, than the disproportionate mass of fools, slaves, coxcombs, thieves, liars, and cut-throats, with which its surface is at present encumbered.”

Peacock allows Mr. Fax to mention the detrimental influence of the poor-laws on the lower classes in the same way as Malthus had done in the second edition of his essay. One can already here catch a glimpse of the position taken up in recent years by the late Herbert Spencer, who was unable to reconcile help and encouragement for the weak and poor with the practical realisation of the "survival of the fittest," and which accounts for so many of his sociological views being looked upon by a large section of his countrymen with suspicion and dislike.

A fourth personage in *Melincourt*, who excites interest, is Desmond. The story of his life, as related by himself, is used by Peacock to convey his own bitter observations on actual life, in which "the wheel of fortune is like a water-wheel, and human beings are like the water it disturbs." Trenchant remarks about philanthropy, literary men, and universities, are embraced in the chapters in which it is related. The whole is pre-empted by the idea of "returning to nature," generally associated with the name of Rousseau. Desmond, unable to find any satisfaction in the deception of the world, consequent upon the tendency implanted in man to commit evil, and aggravated by over-population, retires from life and seeks rest and comfort among the Westmoreland hills. A sample of his prejudices directed against those in authority, and who are usually supposed to be patrons of human welfare and benefactors of their race, is his philippic against universities. This re-echoes Peacock's own views on the subject, as contained in nearly all his writings.*

* Hatred of universities was formerly common in England. Peacock has enunciated his views on the subject, not only in his novels, but especially in his article on Thomas Moore's *Life of Byron*, where he combats Moore's assertion that "discipline is distasteful to genius." He

In Desmond's opinion the universities are so badly managed that the system of education pursued is nothing but "the result of a deep-laid conspiracy against the human understanding, a mighty effort of political and ecclesiastical machiavelism, to turn the energies of inquiring minds into channels, where they will either stagnate in disgust, or waste themselves in nugatory labour."

The heroine of the story, with her romantic turn of mind which has been fostered by early surroundings, is in some respects a picture of Jane Gryffyd, whom Peacock again portrayed—at a time when she was his wife—as Miss Touchandgo in *Crotchet Castle*. This accounts for the description of the north-country scenery being identical with that of the neighbourhood of her Welsh home in Carnarvonshire, where Peacock had frequently visited her family, and which he has depicted in *Headlong Hall* and other novels.

Another feature of *Melincourt* that cannot easily be overlooked is the position taken up by its author as regards his literary contemporaries, and which is a repetition of that adopted in *Headlong Hall*. Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge are treated as renegades who can expect no mercy, while Gifford and the *Quarterly*, in spite of the fact that Peacock borrows considerably

attributes the blame for such men as Milton, Gray, Gibbon, Locke, and Byron, having despised their respective universities to the college and university authorities. Interesting as an illustration of Peacock's antipathy, amusing for its openness and candour, and very characteristic of its author, is the following remark :—"If the universities can make nothing of genius, their discipline, if they were good for anything, might make something of mediocrity or of dulness; but their discipline is mere pretence, and is limited to the non-essentials of education; they settle down mediocrity into a quiet hatred of literature, and confirm a questionable dunce into a hopeless, incurable, and self-satisfied blockhead" (*Westminster Review*, April, 1830, p. 284).

from its pages,* come in for a fair share of castigation. Southey is Mr. Feathernest, and is called to account for purchasing his conscience in order to secure a lucrative position, and burning his *Odes to Truth and Liberty* to enable himself to publish a volume of *Panegyrical Addresses to all the Crowned Heads in Europe*, with the motto, "Whatever is at court is right." Peacock's opinion of Southey can be perhaps summarised by the lines taken from Shakespeare's *Henry VII.*, and affixed by him to a poem in the *Paper Money Lyrics*, assumed to be written by the author of *Wat Tyler*.

"His promises were, as he once was, mighty;
And his performance, as he now is, nothing."

Coleridge appears as Mr. Mystic in a wonderful mansion called *Cimmerian Lodge*, "with fog in the hall, fog in the parlour, fog on the staircase, fog in the bed-room";

"The fog was here, the fog was there,
The fog was all around."

and in which the kitchen seems to the visitors "to be the only spot on the *Island of Intelligence* in which there was a glimmer of light." It is a bitter attack on Coleridge's transcendentalism, and but the prelude to the more scathing ridicule of *Nightmare Abbey* which was to follow.

Wordsworth is the Mr. Paperstamp of Mainchance Villa. In many respects, such as the account of his luxurious habits, the description given is a strong contrast to what we know of the real Wordsworth. The sarcasm is here at times exaggerated and overdone, which can be equally well said of the caricatures of Southey and Coleridge. In a critique that appeared

* Compare the subject-matter of chapter xxxix. with the article on "Parliamentary Reform" in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xvi., pp. 225-278.

soon after the issue of the novel the following sentence is to be found which voices this, without realising, however, the skill and wit that are exhibited by the author:—

“Peacock believes Vamp & Co. are Gifford, Southey, and Wordsworth. Our author pursues his brain-coined shadows to the death, and proceeds to pummel them much to the satisfaction of himself, but more to the fatigue of his readers, little suspecting that the objects of his wrath are but the creatures of his imagination, and that their originals sit like the gods of Epicurus, in their poetical heaven:—

“Above his ribaldry, and above his praise.”*

Of the other characters, Sir Telegraph Paxarett and Mr. Sarcastic—although they take no inconsiderable part in the deliberations—do not call for any particular comment. The “learned mythologist” is probably Thomas Taylor, Peacock’s friend, an eccentric polytheist who wished to introduce into England the divinities of Plato in a system in which God was to be called Jupiter, the Virgin Mary Venus, and Christ Cupid.† Captain Hawltaught has been said to resemble Peacock’s grandfather, while Mr. Portpipe is a typical Peacockian clergyman, and as well indicated by his name as Dr. Killquick, who, needless to say, belongs to the medical profession. Mr. Anyside Antijack is intended for Lord Canning, and is jeered at for having changed from a Whig to a Tory, being a first sketch of the statesman whose views Peacock again attacked with renewed vigour in the *Misfortunes of Elphin*.

* See *British Critic* for October, 1817.

† Mrs. Clarke has made a curious mistake in confounding her grandfather’s friend, Thomas Taylor the Platonist, with Taylor of Norwich. See p. 38 of her Biographical Notice.

Finally, Mr. Killthede is supposed to be Sir John Barrow, a naval expert and Secretary to the Admiralty, whose name was mentioned in after years to Lord Palmerston, together with those of Colebrooke and Peacock, for a private committee to consider the question of steam communication with India.*

Ap[ro]pos the general style of the novel it must be admitted that its length is too great for the subject matter, and that although written in the author's ordinary method with a dash of comicality and caustic wit running through, it is, with the exception of *Gryll Grange*, the least successful of his efforts.†

"NIGHTMARE ABBEY."

Should *Melincourt* be somewhat tedious reading, the same cannot be asserted of the burlesque by which it was followed—*Nightmare Abbey*—which is a specimen of really humorous writing and judiciously confined by the author within narrower limits. Every page exhibits Peacock's truly classical taste, which is happily not marred—as for instance in *Melincourt* or *Gryll Grange*—by the pedantry and ostentation of a self-made scholar.

Here, as elsewhere, we have a criticism of the then leading ideas, and more frequently than is usual by the

* See *Life of the late General F. R. Chesney*, London, 1893, p. 262.

† Shelley was of the opinion that *Melincourt* was better than either *Headlong Hall* or *Nightmare Abbey*, an opinion however, which is not shared in any recent criticism of Peacock's works. See Letter to Peacock dated Pisa, November, 1820:—"Your *Melincourt* is exceedingly admired, and I think much more so than any of your other writings. In this respect the world judges rightly. There is more of the true spirit, and an object less indefinite, than in either *Headlong Hall* or *Seythrop*."

novelist, a view of the poets and legislators by whom they were held. In point of fact Peacock was, as he has himself said of Pigault le Brun, "an observer. He exhibited the play of opinion because he found it in the society he depicted,"* and *Nightmare Abbey* belongs, as his other novels, to the class of comic fiction described by him as "one in which the characters are abstractions or embodied classifications, and the implied or embodied opinions the main matter of the work,"† even though the personages in it be partly portrayed with an unusual and unexpected clearness.

Ostensibly written as a protest against the excessive metaphysical speculation and impassioned feeling of Shelley and other contemporaries, there is plenty of monologue and Socratic dialogue, and a paucity of plot, as to almost exclude it from the realm of pure romance. These "imaginary conversations," resulting from the wish to personify systems and individualise doctrines, are therefore noteworthy, not only as an exception to the general attempts at satire, which result in dreary and stupid failure, but on account of the side-lights they throw upon the thoughts of some of the greatest Englishmen of the last century.

There is, as usual, in *Nightmare Abbey* no inclination on Peacock's part to grant to genius its prerogative, but extraordinary privileges are claimed for criticism. Cordial commendations are conspicuously absent, and a sense of superiority seems to shed complacency over the novelist's mind and feelings, which is benignantly expressed in his opinions. He acts as if he were doing a kindness, but delivers his sentiments in an incisive manner, in which cynicism and a rough good nature are combined. There is no superfluous verbiage—no

* *The London and Westminster Review*, vol. xxxi., p. 357.

† *The London and Westminster Review*, July—January, 1835-6, p. 70.

prosaic explanations—all is bright, terse, and pointed. There are many telling hits, and not a few home truths—caps of all sorts and sizes, as it were, to fit a variety of heads, however unwilling they may be to wear them. It is a racy humour scattered profusely that makes the reader laugh, even when he is conscious to the faults which are laid bare, and which for effectiveness is deserving of Shelley's praise. "His fine wit makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it!"*

Again and again observations are made that merit repetition. "A Frenchman is born in harness, ready saddled, bitted and bridled, for any tryant to ride. He will fawn under his rider one moment, and throw him and kick him to death the next; but another adventurer springs on his back, and by dint of whip and spur, on he goes as before," an illustration which G. Barnett Smith has pertinently called "an epitome of the history of France since the Revolution of 1789";† or the account of a runaway-match made by a young heiress with an Irish officer, and its results, as delineated in the following laconic fashion:—"The lady's fortune disappeared in the first year; love, by a natural consequence, disappeared in the second; the Irishman himself, by a still more natural consequence, disappeared in the third."

This singular work, thus replete with so many clever sayings and so few, if any, colloquial platitudes or nonsense, written in a graceful and flexible style, and bearing everywhere the imprint of a scholarly discrimination and judgment, was written during the ten or eleven months succeeding the publication of *Melincourt*. Some extracts from Shelley's letters to the

* In a letter addressed to Maria Gisborne.

† See *Fortnightly Review*, vol. xx., p. 189. This article on Peacock is reprinted in the *Revue Britannique*, January, 1874.

author will provide some information on this point, and also supply the former's estimate of the latter's novel.

In a letter dated Bagni de Lucca, July 25th, 1818, he writes of Peacock, having already informed him of its completion, and suggests a motto taken from Ben Johnson for the title page. In a second letter, penned some three months later, occurs the following passage:—*"Nightmare Abbey* finished. Well, what is in it? What is it? You are as secret as if the priest of Ceres had dictated its sacred pages"—a remark made at a time when he could have had no idea of Peacock's reason for silence as regards the contents. A further letter of the following year, but of uncertain date, contains a statement relating to the novel, "in which," as Peacock tells us, "he took to himself the character of Scythrop," that shows naturally enough his appreciation of the very enthusiasm to which he was himself subject, and which the book was partly intended to caricature. "I am delighted with *Nightmare Abbey*. I think Scythrop a character admirably conceived and executed, and I know not how to praise sufficiently the lightness, chastity and strength of the language of the whole. It perhaps exceeds all your works in this. The catastrophe is excellent. I suppose the moral is contained in what Falstaff says:—'For God's sake talk like a man of the world';* and yet, looking deep into it, is not the misdirected enthusiasm of Scythrop what J. C. calls the 'salt of the earth?'"

This enthusiasm of an idealist and reformer, devoted to the cause of agitating against many of the institutions, which are generally acknowledged to be the foundation of social order, resulting from a hatred of government or aversion to Christianity, had already

* Marionetta says to Scythrop, in the novel, "I prithee, deliver thyself like a man of the world."

formed the butt for Peacock's satire in his first two novels. The latter was also convinced of the advisability of an alteration in many of the forms and institutions of society, but laughed, as we have already seen, at the vigorous attempt of an impetuous friend to put everything right at a moment's notice. To this difference between the sensitive but precocious mind of the one, and the cool calculating disposition of the other, is due the fact that Shelley often wrote under the influence of a vehement impulse that he could scarcely control, whereas the works of his friend always bear the traces of a mature reflection.

Scythrop dotes "on the practicability of reviving a confederation of regenerators," and writes a treatise which does not meet with the success he had anticipated for it. In his disappointment at being informed by his publisher that only seven copies had been disposed of, he does not despair. "Seven copies have been sold. Seven is a mystical number, and the omen is good. Let me find the seven purchasers of my seven copies, and they shall be the seven gold candlesticks with which I will illuminate the world." Obviously an allusion to the Dublin pamphlet, *A Proposal for an Association of Philanthropists*, we have here the expression of resolute adhesion to a standpoint once taken up, and the sanguine belief in eventual success, so characteristic of Shelley. The following extract from one of his letters—written in an unusually disconsolate tone—may be quoted as showing how little the result of his strenuous efforts in Ireland corresponded with his expectations:—"The association proceeds slowly, and I fear will not be established. Prejudices are so violent, in contradiction to my principles, that more hate me as a freethinker than love me as a votary of freedom. I have at least made a stir here, and set some men's

minds afloat. I may succeed, but I fear I shall not, in the main object of associations."*

When Peacock represents Shelley here, as in his other tales, not as a writer of verses but as a reformer, it should not be forgotten that the author of *A Defence of Poetry* considered the highest aim of the poet to be that of a philosopher, social and political reformer, a legislator, as he has himself asserted, for the human race, and that he also found "poetry very subordinate to moral and political science."

If his impersonation as a reformer by Peacock, whose vocation at this time consisted mainly in cavilling at existing institutions and taking umbrage at his associate's enthusiastic plans for supplanting them by better ones, is a theme with which the pages of his first two novels are filled, still more pronounced and quite new is the satire in *Nightmare Abbey* of Shelley as a transcendentalist and former proselyte of the weird or Hoffmanesque method of writing.

This type of fiction had suddenly gained great celebrity through the novels of Walpole, Mrs. Clara Reeve, and Mrs. Radcliffe, and later on especially among the Germans, who were at the time sedulous readers of everything English. At first these German works were confined to the land of their origin, but with the revival of interest in Teutonic literature at the end of the eighteenth century they began to be translated, and to at once control the English products of the same character. These German and English novels of pseudo-horror of the so-called *Renaissance of Wonder*, destitute of all comic spirit, and devoid of common-sense and genuine feeling, were so successful that it almost seemed as if they were going to control the novelists of the dawning century, and

* See Letter of Shelley addressed to Miss Hitchener, and dated March 10th, 1812.

present a remarkable contrast to the humourists of the preceding one. They diminished, however, soon after in number, and have now almost disappeared, although the inordinate craving for sensationalism of recent years has accounted for many books of a similar strain, but written in a very modified form.*

Novels of this kind, shrouded in mystery—the scene of charnel terrors or spectral illusion, and in the majority of cases of obscure and revolting crimes—whose hero, or rather, villain, was generally a morbid debauchee, a lascivious priest, a hobgoblin, or, as is actually the case in many, including some of Maturin's, the Devil himself,—were for some time as heartily admired by Shelley as they were always radically detested by his sober-minded friend. The former attempted to revive the uncouth horrors and demoniacal incarnations of the *Monk*; the works of the latter bear no single trace of the vapid sentimentality and disordered imagination of a Lewis, in whose novel morality was disregarded and literature disgraced.† If the romanticist

* The “penny dreadfuls,” the outcome of the same literary movement, approach nearer to their originals, but cannot be seriously considered, as they are of such a nature as to hardly belong to literature at all.

† The influence of the “tales of horror” upon Shelley is at present an unwritten chapter in his development as a poet and an author. The publication of the *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, by Garnett (London and New York, 1898), has thrown a curious light upon it, which has not been adequately explained. As the interest in this volume of “doggerel” has become so great that £600 have been recently paid at a London auction for one of the two original copies that have been found, the following remarks, directly connected with the subject of the present paper, may not be altogether without value. In the course of the search for it, which its editor has called “a bibliographical event as rare, as according to Petrarch, the appearance of a Laura in heaven,” Professor Dowden discovered a short critique of it in the *British Critic*, while another gentleman found a few lines of a similar purport in another journal. Strange to say, a long article in the *Literary Panorama*, vol. viii., p. 1064, containing copious extracts from many of the poems, was entirely overlooked, and has up to the present

puts on the front page of his novel the lines of Horace as an indication of its contents—

“Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula sagas,
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque,”

they are but quoted by Peacock with the additional words, “Thessala rides,” belonging to them to show

not been mentioned. The discovery of the missing volume by a member of the Shelley family has, however, now deprived it of the great importance it would otherwise possess. The reason of Shelley's withdrawal of his so-called *Original Poems* was due to his publisher Stockdale finding one of Monk Lewis' poems printed verbatim in its pages. As Garnett has been unable to ascertain which poem this was, so much so that he confesses “some doubt whether Stockdale's testimony is entirely reliable,” and has made sundry guesses which are all incorrect, it may be here stated that the poem in question is undoubtedly “Saint Edmund's Eve,” pp. 37-44, which is copied word for word from a poem entitled “The Black Canon of Elmham or Saint Edmund's Eve,” from Lewis' *Tales of Terror*, 1799 and 1808 editions. In addition to this, Garnett has also not found out that the subject-matter of the two other longest poems in the collection are derived nearly entirely from the same author. The poem, “Ghastha,” pp. 50-62—the origin of whose first stanza has been rightly explained to have been influenced by Chatterton—is nothing more or less than a versification by Shelley of the tale of *Don Raymond, The Bleeding Nun*, and the *Wandering Jew* as related in the *Monk*, with some minor alterations. “The Revenge,” pp. 45-49, is due to the story of the *Castle of Lindenberg* and the ballad of *Alonso the Brave* in the same romance. These parts of the *Monk* are themselves derived from German sources. As a specimen of Shelley's plagiarism, and as an illustration of Lewis acting as a mediary of German influence on the former's youthful works, the following nineteenth stanza from “Ghastha” will prove:—

“Thou art mine, and I am thine,
Till the sinking of the world,
I am thine, and thou art mine,
Till in ruin death is hurled.”

which is taken from the corresponding lines in the *Monk*:—

“Agnes! Agnes! thou art mine,
Agnes! Agnes! I am thine,
In my veins while blood shall roll,
Thou art mine! I am thine!
Thine my body! thine my soul!”

Thomas Moore's misconception of the epicurean philosophy in believing that its adherents maintained the verity of dreams, together "with the belief in

which in their turn—as the whole story of the *Bleeding Nun*, of which they form a part—go back upon one of Musæus' fairy tales called *Die Entführung* :—

"Ich habe dich, nie lass ich dich :
fein Liebchen du bist mein,
fein Liebchen ich bin dein,
du mein, ich dein,
mit Leib und Seele."

It appears to the writer of the present paper that a careful investigation of the contents of Shelley's other juvenile works, with those of Lewis, would show that he was largely indebted to this romanticist, not only as has hitherto been supposed as regards style, but also as regards subject-matter. Buxton Forman and other critics have conjectured, for instance, that Shelley derived most of the contents of his novel, *Zastrozzi*, from German originals. His statement in his Preface of Shelley's Prose Works "that the repeated accounts of Matilda's violent passions are beyond the probabilities of so youthful an imagination as Shelley's at that time, and were more likely to have been taken from some unpleasant foreign book that he did not more than half understand," is quite incorrect. There can be little doubt that they are directly derived from the similar character of the same name in the *Monk*, and it is interesting to observe, in connection with Forman's statement, that Lewis was at the time he wrote his novel about the same age as Shelley was when he wrote his. To further show how *Zastrozzi* is nothing but a second version of certain portions of the *Monk* with, however, great alterations—a fact which has, as far as the writer is aware, up to the present escaped notice—the following resemblances can be alluded to :—The character of Matilda corresponds in nearly every respect with that of Matilda in the *Monk*; Verezzi resembles Ambrosio; and Julia, Antonia. *Zastrozzi* may be said to take the part of the Devil in the *Monk*. The greatest difference between the two romances is that Shelley eliminates the idea and use of supernatural agency. In the *Monk*, Matilda, who drives Ambrosio and Antonia to ruin and ultimate death, is the direct agent of the Devil. In Shelley's novel, Matilda, who precipitates in ruin Verezzi and Julia, is urged on by *Zastrozzi*, who, although one might imagine him to be the Evil One himself by the way he acts and is described, is still only desirous of avenging his mother, who has been seduced by Verezzi. *Zastrozzi* is indirectly the cause of his father's death in the same way that Ambrosio kills his own mother, and in both cases the relationship between the villains and their victims is first disclosed at the end of the respective

witchcraft, and raw-head-and-bloody bones."* Peacock's shrewd common-sense was already evident in him as a child, and it is no matter of surprise when he states in the *Recollections of Childhood* that the ghost stories and other romances of the day did not appeal to his childish imagination. But Shelley's boyish passion for abstract thinking, on the other hand, was naturally drawn to all such tales:—

"While yet a boy I sought for ghosts and sped
Thro' many a lonely chamber, cave, and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing,
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead."

Later on Medwin, Godwin, Jefferson Hogg, and Peacock laughed at him for his transcendentalism, which about this time, as the first-named has stated, "ran on bandits, castles, ruined towers, wild mountains, storms, and apparitions."† The affair at Tannyralt, where Shelley imagined a ruffian to have made an atrocious attack upon his life, has been explained by Peacock as the result of hallucination—a view that is now generally accepted.

tales. As the one (Matilda) is the means of rescuing the life of her beloved Verezzi, so the other, under similar circumstances, that of her enamoured Ambrosio, and in both cases these acts conduce to the gratification of sensual wishes. In the one novel there is a glowing description of Matilda watching at the bedside of Ambrosio, and in the other of Matilda at that of Verezzi, and at the end of both there is a scene before the Inquisition, etc. As Lewis himself drew material extensively from German sources, the above indication of Shelley's indebtedness to him does not necessarily disprove the previously-accepted idea of Shelley owing much in his juvenile works to German romanticism, but at least exhibits this supposition in a novel and interesting aspect.

* See Peacock's article on Thomas Moore's "Epicurean" in the *Westminster Review*, October 1827, pp. 351-384.

† See Trelawny's *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*, London, 1887, p. 160.

This morbid tendency of Shelley's mind was nurtured by German romance, although nothing like to the extent that has been assumed. Leigh Hunt states that when he found Shelley at Oxford engaged in translating the works of some of the inferior writers of that country he informed him that he was wasting his time—a piece of advice with which Peacock would have concurred, if we are to judge from the spirit in which *Nightmare Abbey* is written. We know also that Peacock, although he had an understanding for the greatest genius of modern times, “disliked everything German,”* apart from this admiration for Goethe. He has openly stated this in *Gryll Grange*, where he quotes Porson's saying, that “Life is too short to learn German,” explaining it as “meaning not that it is too difficult to be acquired within the ordinary space of life, but that there is nothing in it to compensate for the portion of life bestowed on its acquirement.”

This disapproval of his friend having formerly misapplied his talents, owing to a preposterous mode of delight in blood-and-thunder novels—as shown by the above remarks—found its natural expression in the mysterious personality of Scythrop. This strange character portrayed like Ruskin wrote of Shelley, “sickly dreaming over clouds and waves,”† is described as a student of Kantian philosophy, to which Peacock was opposed, perhaps owing to the reason given by Garnett, namely, that he never took the trouble to study or comprehend it. This supposition of Shelley having been largely acquainted with Kant's works is somewhat overdone in the novel, as there is every reason to infer that he did not extensively study this philosopher's system as Scythrop is supposed to do,

* See Littel's *Living Age*, Boston, vol. cxxvi., p. 157.

† In note to vol. ii. of *Modern Painters*.

which may partly be attributed to Peacock's successful efforts to deter him from doing so.*

Some of Peacock's descriptions of Scythrop's youthful aberrations may here follow, as a satirical, but at the same time in most respects accurate account of one of the most interesting periods in Shelley's life. "He began to devour romances and German tragedies, and, by the recommendation of Mr. Flosky, to pore over ponderous tomes of transcendental philosophy, which reconciled him to the labour of studying them by their mystical jargon and necromantic imagery. In the congenial solitude of *Nightmare Abbey*, the distempered ideas of metaphysical romance and romantic metaphysics had ample time and space to germinate into a fertile crop of chimeras, which rapidly shot up into vigorous and abundant vegetation. He slept with horrid mysteries under his pillow, and dreamed of venerable eleutherarchs and ghastly confederates holding midnight conventions in subterranean caves. He passed whole mornings in his study, immersed in gloomy reverie, stalking about the room in his nightcap, which he pulled over his eyes like a cowl, and folded his striped calico dressing-gown about him like the mantle of a conspirator. He constructed models of cells and recesses, sliding panels and secret passages, that would have baffled the skill of the Parisian police," and glided about "like the grand inquisitor, and the servants flitted past him like familiars. In his evening meditations on the terrace, under the ivy of the ruined tower, the only

* Hogg in describing Shelley's lodgings writes "In one recess remained, but little disturbed by any of us, in a long row, a Latin edition or translation of the works of Emanuel Kant. It was comprised in I know not how many volumes; they were in boards, and were uncut and unopened. Of these the young metaphysician had been most anxious to obtain possession, but he totally neglected them when obtained. See Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii., p. 311; or Dowden's *Shelley*, vol. i., p. 368.

sounds that came to his ear were the rustling of the wind in the ivy, the plaintive voices of the feather-choristers, the owls, the occasional striking of the abbey clock, and the monotonous dash of the sea on its level shore."

Very amusing is the way in which Peacock sometimes imitates the extravagant style of writing common to all the "tales of wonder," as in his description of an imaginary secret tribunal (ch. iii.), that may be meant for a reference to the "auto da fé" in *Zastrozzi*, or the account of the effect of a slight incident "on the high-wrought enthusiasm of the romantic innamorato," in that Scythrop is related as excitedly springing up and beating his own forehead with clenched fists. Such remarks recall Shelley's ungovernable language in some of his earlier works, as for instance in *St. Irvynne*, where the characters are not only terrified, but "anguished" and "enhorrored," and the sensation of joy experienced by the hero expressed as "a transport of delight; burning ecstasy revelled through his veins, pleasurable coruscations were emitted from his eyes."

But to turn from this psychological study of Shelley's mysticism, which, together with that of Coleridge, is finally ridiculed by the "ghost" turning out to be a mere somnambulist. *Nightmare Abbey* is further noteworthy as containing many direct references to Shelley's life. Since there are allusions enough that cannot be mistaken, it is unnecessary to make any forced comparisons, as, for instance, between "Nightmare Abbey" and "Field Place," or Christopher Glowry and Sir Timothy Shelley, even though in both cases points of resemblance are not altogether wanting. Very plain, and impossible to be overlooked, is the account of Shelley's education at Eton, "a public school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him," and Oxford,

‘the University, where it was carefully taken out of him.’ As Shelley’s engagement to his cousin Harriet Grove was abruptly broken off soon after his expulsion from Oxford, so that of Scythrop, after his quitting the University, with his cousin Emily Girouette, and in both cases the lady proceeds with all haste to marry another gentleman.

Indeed, the material which constitutes the slight plot of the tale is nothing but a satire upon one of the most painful incidents in Shelley’s career. The latter had, in the year preceding the publication of *Nightmare Abbey*, abandoned Harriet Westbrook for Mary Godwin, owing partly to the inability of his first wife to “feel poetry and understand philosophy.” Peacock has made Scythrop’s transference of affection from Marionetta to Stella, due to an identical motive, and has described the two aspirants for his love in a manner that makes it easy to identify that they are intended for the two ladies between whom Shelley for a time, as Scythrop, was like a shuttlecock between two battledores, changing its direction as rapidly as the oscillations of a pendulum.”*

* As an illustration of this resemblance, the description of Marionetta may here follow, together with that of Harriet Shelley, as given in Peacock’s *Memoirs*. These descriptions tally in nearly every respect with the few opinions and accounts given of her by other contemporaries—such, for instance, with that of Shelley’s sister, Helen.

Marionetta.—“Miss Marionetta Celestina O’Carroll was a very blooming and accomplished young lady Her hair was light brown; her eyes hazel, and sparkling with a mild but fluctuating light; her features regular; her lips full and of equal size; and her person surpassingly graceful. She was proficient in music. Her conversation was sprightly, but always on subjects light in their nature and limited in their interest; for moral sympathies, in any general sense, had no place in her mind. She had some coquetry, and more caprice, liking and disliking almost in the same moment; pursuing an object with earnestness, while it seemed unattainable, and rejecting it when in her power as not worth the trouble of possession.”

Harriet Shelley.—“She had a good figure, light, active, and graceful; her features were regular and well proportioned; her hair was light brown,

Gradually Scythrop's love for Marionetta appears as an illusion, his enthusiasm for her spends itself, as he recognises that she is only interested in trivial matters and has no interest for his mental occupations, in the same way that Shelley turned from her,—

“Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more,”

because, as Peacock tells us in his *Memoirs*, “he had found in another the intellectual qualities which constituted his ideality of the partner of his life.” The attempt of Scythrop's father and uncle to prevent his marriage schemes irresistibly recall Shelley's belief in his father's and uncle's designs on his liberty, and very pointed, as Buchanan says, is the scene where the distracted Scythrop threatens his father to commit suicide. As the tale humorously ends with Scythrop being deserted by Marionetta and Stella, there is nothing offensive to propriety in the plot, which does not turn upon the infraction of any particular commandment as the development of the corresponding events in Shelley's life did, or has been stated of Goethe's drama that deals with a similar problem, and which has supplied Miss Celinda Flosky in the novel with another name.

A character-sketch, also directly connected with the phase of Shelley's life, is that of the Hon. Mr. Listless. Introduced as a friend of Scythrop, he is meant for Sir Lumley Skeffington, a fop of the day, who had

and dressed with taste and simplicity. In her dress she was truly ‘simple and unadorned’! Her complexion was beautifully transparent, the tint of a blush rose shining through the lily. The tone of her voice was pleasant; her speech the essence of frankness and cordiality; her spirits always cheerful; her laugh spontaneous, hearty, and joyous. She was well educated. She read agreeably and intelligently. She wrote only letters but she wrote them well. Her manners were good; and her whole aspect and demeanour such manifest emanations of pure and truthful nature that to be once in her company was to know her thoroughly.”

viously ridiculed by Byron for his *Skirtless and Skeletons of Plays*. This gentleman had insulted, as well as Peacock, by Shelley, after his wife's death, as to the advisability of his at once marrying Mary Godwin, so that there is every reason to suppose that Peacock came personally into contact with him. He is correctly portrayed as wilfully having energy and possessing a reluctance to think. He has the last-named difficulty by keeping a French waiter to refresh his memory, whom he summons on every available occasion whenever anything does not at once occur to him. If he succumbs to Marionetta's charms, it is still almost too great an exertion for him to fall in love, and after he has managed to do so, he is so indolent that he can hardly induce himself to turn away from the music for the lady he is making love to.*

Of the other minor characters, Mr. Asterias seems to be intended for Sir John Sinclair; Mr. Sackbut, who is in the habit of reviewing his own poems, for Southey;† and Mr. Toobad, the Manichæan Millenarian, with his crying, "the Devil is come among you," for some other contemporary, who was guilty in Peacock's eyes of a too firm belief in the predominance of the evil principle.

There are two other personages depicted who, in conclusion, call for some longer comment, namely, Messrs. Flosky and Cypress—the one used as a further aid by the author to poke fun at metaphysical ideas, especially those entertained by Coleridge; and the other to place in a ridiculous light the moody melancholy of Byron and his protégées.

* Sir Lumley Skeffington was not so chary about love-making as Peacock's Hon. Mr. Listless. However negligent he might have been about other matters, his book, *The Amatory Works of Tom Shuffleton of Middle Temple*, London, 1815, exhibits him as an adept and old hand in this respect.

† Southey is ridiculed under the same name in Hone's *Slap at Slap*.

Mr. Flosky is delineated in a manner which leaves no doubt as to his identity:—"a very lachrymose and morbid gentleman, of some note in the literary world, but in his own estimation of much more merit than name. No one could relate a dismal story with so many minutiae of supererogatory wretchedness. No one could call up a 'raw-head-and-bloody bones' with so many adjuncts and circumstances of ghastliness. Mystery was his mental element. He lived in the midst of that visionary world in which nothing is but what is not. He dreamed with his eyes open, and saw ghosts dancing round him at noontide.* He had been in his youth an enthusiast for liberty, and had hailed the dawn of the French Revolution as the promise of a day that was to banish war and slavery, and every form of vice and misery, from the face of the earth. Because all this was not done, he deduced that nothing was done; and from this deduction, according to his system of logic, he drew a conclusion that worse than nothing was done; that the overthrow of the feudal fortresses of tryanny and superstition was the greatest calamity that had ever befallen mankind, and that their only hope was now to rake the rubbish together, and rebuild it without any of those loopholes by which the light had originally crept in. To qualify himself for a coadjutor in this laudable task, he plunged into the central opacity of Kantian metaphysics, and lay 'perdu' several years in transcendental darkness,

* Peacock's satirical allusions to Coleridge as a firm and actual believer in ghosts are slightly exaggerated. "I live in a world of ghosts. I see a ghost at this moment" (chap. xii.), etc. Sir James Macintosh is, for instance, reported to have said that the best remark he ever heard made about ghosts was made by Coleridge, who, when interrogated by a lady as to his belief in them, replied:—"No, Madam. I have seen too many to believe in them." See *Memoirs of C. R. Leslie, London, 1860, vol. i., p. 47.*

till the common-daylight of common-sense became intolerable to his eyes. He called the sun an *ignis futurus*!"

What ever might be said against the justice of the general view taken of Coleridge by Peacock in this and other descriptions of him, it must be admitted that the author of *Christabel* and the *Biographia Literaria*—both of which had appeared about two years before *Nightmare Abbey*—had supplied a hater of every sort of mysticism and all dreamy philosophical ideas with a large amount of material for his satire. The ignorance of common things manifested by Mr. Flosky, as by Coleridge in his life, irritated Peacock, who ascribed it to a delight in abstract thought. Abstruse and esoteric ideas, such as the distinction between "fancy" and "imagination," or "reason" and "understanding," upon which Coleridge laid such great weight, were regarded by him as quite immaterial and of no real importance. If Coleridge was under the impression that the philosophy of one generation would become the common-sense of the next, Peacock was soundly convinced—whether rightly or wrongly—that Coleridge's ideas were, for the present, nonsense, and did not trouble to think out what they might develop into. And should many eminent men, such as Stirling, Maurice, or John Stuart Mill, have perceived in Coleridge a great metaphysician who enriched English thought and endowed it with higher aims and fresh impulses; still there are others, like Peacock, who never have approved of the un-English bias taken by Coleridge's mind under German guidance. Carlyle, for instance, who was as inclined to prejudge everything German as good, in the same way that Peacock was predisposed to do the contrary, has himself repudiated the Coleridgean metaphysic. "He was thought to hold—he alone in England—the key of German and other transcendentalism; knew the sublimo

secret of believing by the 'reason' what the 'understanding' had been obliged to fling out as incredible, and speaking of his "Kantian haze-world," with its "vacant air-castles and dim-melting ghosts and shadows," he adds, "His life had been an abstract thinking and dreaming, idealistic, passed amid the ghosts of defunct bodies and of unborn ones. The moaning, sing-song of that theosophico-metaphysical monotony left on you, at last, a very dreary feeling."* A poet who in this way devoted his time to abstract problems, and as a result produced so little in proportion to the extent of his talents and genius, could hardly be expected to be exonerated from all blame in the judgment of one whose views on the non-value of metaphysics were so pronounced as those of Peacock.

Misapplied to a certain degree on the other hand is the latter's low estimate of Coleridge's poetry, which little as the amount may be, undoubtedly exhibits strong glow of poetic fancy. In the *Four Ages of Poetry* the most able member of what its writer calls "that egregious confraternity of rhymesters, known by the name of the Lake Poets," is summarily disposed of as being under the influence "of crazy theologians and the mysticisms of German metaphysics," and scouted with indulging "the world with visions in verse, in which the quadruple elements of sexton, old woman, Jeremy Taylor, and Emmanuel Kant are harmonized into a delicious poetical compound."†

Coleridge's desertion, under the influence of Kant

* See Carlyle's *Life of Stirling*, chap. viii.

† In one of his articles in the *Westminster Review* (1830, p. 302) Peacock makes some appreciative remarks about Coleridge as a poet, calling *Christabel* "a most beautiful little poem," etc. He however does so in vindicating its author against the attacks of an Edinburgh Reviewer; and it is therefore possible that these opinions are the outcome of Peacock's intense hatred of the Scotch Magazine having got the better of his dislike for Coleridge.

and Schelling of Platonic pantheism for a creed in which religion and philosophy were to be reconciled, was also a stumbling block for Peacock, who could not be impressed by a half-measure, through whose means a system quite strange to him was to supersede one for which he had the highest admiration. In addition to this Coleridge's change of opinion on the subject of the French Revolution did not meet with his approval, since he regarded the former radical in the light of a renegade and turn-coat, and in so doing shared a view held by many of his contemporaries.

The high-flown language and stupid arguments used by Mr. Flosky in his conversation, especially in that with Marionetta (chap. viii.), are further, one of the most cynical of the many censorious accounts that exist of Coleridge as a talker. Such persiflage, if not altogether justified, was provoked by a man, who, as Hazlitt says, only talked "for admiration and to be listened to." The same critic has also dubbed him an excellent talker, provided he started from no premises and arrived at no conclusion; and Carlyle affirms that he once talked two hours with him without being able to grasp the gist of his conversation.* Mr. Flosky believes the most satisfactory exercise for the mind to be elaborate reasoning, and condoles with "the man who can see the connection of his own ideas," and still more sympathises with the unfortunate being, "the connection of whose ideas any other person can see."

Extremely sarcastic is the parody of Coleridge's Introductory Note to *Kubla Khan*, in the account given in the novel of its origin:—"That is strange: nothing is so becoming to a man as an air of mystery. Mystery

* Hazlitt, in his essay on Coleridge in *The Spirit of the Age*, speaks of him as "having gadded about, from house to house, as if life's business were to melt the hours in listless talk."

is the very keystone of all that is beautiful in poetry, all that is sacred in faith, and all that is recondite in transcendental psychology. I am writing a ballad which is all mystery; 'it is such stuff as dreams are made of,' and is, indeed, stuff made of a dream: for, last night I fell asleep as usual over my book, and had a vision of pure reason. I composed 500 lines in my sleep; so that, having had a dream of a ballad, I am now officiating as my own Peter Quince, and making a ballad of my dream, and it shall be called *Bottom's Dream*, because it has no bottom." Even should Coleridge have actually believed that there exists "a class of poetry built on the foundation of dreams,"* his statement of the origin of *Kubla Khan* was not generally accepted at the time, and came in for a large amount of adverse criticism. Charles Lamb called the poem "nonsense," while Hazlitt, writing in the *Edinburgh Review* immediately after its publication, styled it a "thing utterly destitute of value," in addition to "one of the most notable pieces of impertinence of which the press has lately been guilty."† In recent years, however, it has been much admired. George Meredith, for example, has chosen it for one of the "Fine Passages in Prose and Verse selected by Living Men of Letters."‡

But if the way in which Mr. Flosky is described exhibits on the part of the novelist contempt for Coleridge, the lively delineation of Byron's character in the person of Mr. Cypress is almost devoid of any spirit of animosity. The visitor to *Nightmare Abbey* is introduced for the purpose of leave-taking. He apprises the house-party of his coming departure from England, and assigns a reason for it:—"Sir, I have

* See *Plain Speaker*, London, 1826, vol. i., p. 47.

† *Edinburgh Review*, September, 1816, p. 66.

‡ See *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1887, p. 310.

quarrelled with my wife; and a man who has quarrelled with his wife is absolved from all duty to his country. I have written an ode to tell the people as much, and they may take it as they list." With his fashion of going abroad. Mr. Cypress is also convinced that life consists of inflicting injury and enduring it, and practises what Mr. Flosky would call "the art of being miserable for misery's sake." In an article in the *Westminster Review* Peacock has given a diagnosis of Byron's character, which indicates the cause of many of his misfortunes. "Whatever figures filled up the middle and background of his pictures, the foreground was invariably consecrated to his own. He gave full vent to his feelings; but he hinted, rather than communicated the circumstances of their origin, and he mixed up in his hints shadowy self-accusations of imaginary crimes, on which, of course, the liberal public put the worse possible construction."*

It is superfluous to quote many of Mr. Cypress's sayings, which are almost exclusively derived from *Childe Harold*; but one may here follow as a sample of the poet who had declared Peacock's novels "too good for his age," and with whom he was shortly to become nearer acquainted as a co-executor of Shelley's will. "I have no hope for myself or for others. Our life is a false nature; it is not in the harmony of things; it is an all-blasting upas, whose root is earth, and whose leaves are the skies which rain their poison-dews upon mankind. We wither from our youth; we gasp with unslaked thirst for unattainable good; lured from the first to the last by the phantoms—love, fame, ambition, avarice—all idle, and all ill—one meteor of many names, that vanishes in the smoke of death." Still better has Peacock contrived to convey this feature of Byron's

* *Westminster Review*, April, 1830, p. 270.

character in the poem, "There is a fever of a spirit," which, if it should not be unequalled "for combined sympathy and malice,"* is decidedly the best poem among the fugitive verse in the novel:—

"There is a fever of the spirit,
The brand of Cain's unresting doom,
Which in the lone dark souls that bear it
Glow like the lamp in Tullia's tomb:
Unlike that lamp, its subtle fire
Burns, blasts, consumes its cell, the heart,
Till, one by one hope, joy, desire,
Like dreams of shadowy smoke depart.

"When, hope, love, life itself, are only
Dust—spectral memories—dead and cold—
The unfed fire burns bright and lonely,
Like that undying lamp of old:
And by that dreary illumination,
Till time its clay-built home has rent,
Thought broods on feeling's desolation—
The soul is its own monument."

"MAID MARIAN."

The next novel published by Peacock was *Maid Marian* (March, 1822). This is a legendary rather than historical romance, since all the incidents relating to Robin Hood and his outlaws have long been recognised to be not only unauthenticated but also false. The first allusion to Maid Marian's name occurs about 1500, while the plot of the novel is derived from a play written as late as 1601.

* Edmund Gosse, *The English Poets*. Edited by T. H. Ward, London, 1880, vol. iv., p. 417.

The subject is admirably adapted for the purpose for which it was used, and Peacock's romance gradually attracted recognition, although it was at first completely overshadowed by *Ivanhoe*, which appeared three years previously, and contained the same story somewhat differently dealt with. The result of this coincidence was that Peacock was taunted with plagiarism, and his work regarded as an abridged edition of Scott's novel.* Peacock had himself foreseen the possibility of this happening, and in order to avoid it, provided *Maid Marian* with the following prefatory note:—

"This little work, with the exception of the last three chapters, was all written in the autumn of 1818,"

which was the means, however, not of disarming suspicion, but rather of arousing and increasing it.

This statement represents undoubtedly the truth, as there is sufficient evidence to show that Peacock had nearly completed his romance long before *Ivanhoe* issued from the press. A comparison of *Melincourt* and *Maid Marian* reveals that while Peacock was writing the former, which appeared before *Ivanhoe*, he was already dealing with the latter. This is indicated by the inclusion in *Melincourt* of the song, "Why are thy looks so blank, grey friar?" which, if it does not resemble "Though I be now a grey, grey friar" in *Maid Marian*, is still founded, like its counterpart in this respect, upon one or many of its numerous prototypes in the Robin Hood ballads. Peacock mentions, too, in a letter addressed to Shelley, dated November 29th, 1818, being hard at work upon it, and the short Diary included in Sir Henry Cole's *Biographical Notes* has a reference to the same affect.

* A novel, *Robin Hood: a Tale of the Olden Time*, Edinburgh, also appeared in 1819. It has, however, little or no resemblance with either *Ivanhoe* or *Maid Marian*.

Indeed, it is not quite irrational to assume that we have to go as far back as the year 1816 for the commencement of the novel, since the following entries taken from Mrs. Shelley's Diary appear to have some connection with it:—September 30th, 1816. "Peacock calls; talk with him concerning the heiresses and Marian, arrange his marriage." October 14th, 1816:—"Peacock calls. I take some interest in this man, but no possible conduct of his would disturb my tranquility. Walk with Peacock to the pond; talk of Marian and Greek metre."* Is not the Marian, to whom allusion is here made, the novel itself, or is it possible that someone is meant to whom Peacock stood in some near relation, but of whom, apart from these notices, we know nothing? In the latter case it is perhaps not too hazardous to infer that the novel—since it bears this lady's name—is the outcome of the author's desire to perpetuate her memory.

The above-mentioned resemblance with *Ivanhoe* is further confined to the tale of Robin Hood, which had been told many times before, as there is no reference whatever to the best characters of Scott's novel, those of the Saxons, Cedric and Athelstan, the dauntless Bois de Guilbert or the beautiful Rebecca. That *Maid Marian* is somewhat like certain parts of *Ivanhoe* is therefore due not to the extraction by the author of the former novel of his subject-matter from the novel of the latter one, but to the fact that both Scott and Peacock used for their works the same Robin Hood plays and legends that had about this time gained general favour.

This popularity had been mainly brought about through their publication by the antiquary Joseph Ritson, although they had for some time previously been more

* See *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, by Julia Marshall, London, 1889, vol. i., pp. 90 and 93.

or less known through a collection of songs and ballads called *Robin Hood's Garland*, which had passed through some thirty editions in the same number of years preceding the publication of *Maid Marian*.

There can be little doubt that Peacock was thoroughly acquainted with these works, as he is indebted to them for much of his detail, but it is also equally certain that the real source of his novel is to be sought elsewhere. *Maid Marian* occupies an insignificant place in the ballads. In one of the earliest and best known, the "Lytell geste of Robyn Hooode," she is not even mentioned, and her name, when it occasionally occurs in the later ones, is generally associated with the old morris dance, in which she, together with Robin Hood, Little John, and Friar Tuck, is supposed to have taken a principal part, but which is not alluded to by Peacock.*

The story of *Maid Marian* can only be traced back to 1592, in which year Stow (*Annales*) relates it as follows:—"The Chronicle of Dunmow sayth this discord arose betwixt the king and his barons, because of Mawd called the faire, daughter to Robert Fitzwater, whome the king loved, but the father would not consent, and thereupon ensued warre throughout England. Whilst Mawd the faire remayned at Dunmow, there came a messenger unto her from King John about his suite in love, but because she would not agree, the messenger poysoned a boyled or potched egge against she was hungrie, whereof she died."†

John plays here in some respects a similar part as by Peacock, but a relation between Marian and Robin

* One of the few ballads connected with the legend of *Maid Marian* is, as the name implies, "*Robin Hood and Maid Marian*." It contains, however, the account of an incident which is not dealt with in Peacock's novel.

† See p. 66 of Ritson's introduction to his "*Collection of Songs and Ballads about Robin Hood*, London, 1795."

Hood is not hinted at. The first work in which the idea of the supposititious daughter of Lord Fitzwater adopting the name of "Marian," and accompanying Robin Hood on his adventures during his outlawry, is an old play written conjointly by Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle, and it is from this play that Peacock has derived the pith of his romance.

It is titulated "The death of Robert, earle of Huntingdon, otherwise called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde; with the lamentable tragedie of chaste Matilda, his faire maid Marian, poysoned at Dunmowe by King John," and was printed in London in 1601.* A resemblance with this play can be traced through nearly the whole of *Maid Marian*. The drama begins with the interruption of the Earl of Huntingdon's wedding and his consequent outlawry in precisely the same way as the novel. Both works contain an account of a quarrel between Baron Fitzwater and Prince John, although it is differently and more ably related by Peacock, who introduces it somewhat later in his narrative. In the *Downfall*, for instance, Prince John is already mentioned as being in love with Matilda, in Act i., Scene iii., whereas the allusion to this in the novel occurs first in the ninth chapter. In the drama Fitzwater's daughter joins her lover, who has degenerated

* Peacock does not appear to have used another play with almost the same name, and written by one of the authors of the above-named tragedy "The downfall of Robert, earle of Huntingdon, afterwards called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde; with his love to chaste Matilda, the Lord Fitzwater's daughter, afterwards his faire maide Marian," by Anthony Munday, London, 1601. Another play with which Peacock may have been acquainted, although he did not borrow from it, is Ben Johnson's "The Sad Shepherd; or, a tale of Robin Hood." Many of the dramatis personæ are the same—Robin Hood, Marian, Scarlet, Much the Miller, Little John, Friar Tuck, etc.,—while there are others which are not represented by Peacock, such as Puck Hairy or Robin Goodfellow, the witch of Papplewick, her daughter, and a devout hermit.

into a freebooter, is formally married to him, and re-christened "*Maid Marian*,"—a course of events that is also followed by the novelist. One great improvement Peacock has made is that he has avoided calling *Matilda Marian* before, and *Matilda* after she has adopted the name *Marian*, which is such a conspicuous and confusing shortcoming of the play. The scene in which *Matilda* assumes a new name, and decides to assist her lover in the prosecution of his predatory acts, is not only analogous as regards the subject-matter, but also exhibits traces of a similarity in language.

The following citations, extracted and abridged from the two works will sufficiently illustrate this. They describe the "Orders" of the freebooters as contained in *Maid Marian* on the one hand, and in the *Downfall* on the other, which are represented in both cases as having been spoken by Little John.

*Downfall** :—

"First no man must presume to call our master,
By name of earle, lorde, baron, knight, or squire :
But simply by the name of Robin Hoode—
That faire *Matilda* henceforth change her name,
And by *Maid Marian*'s name be only cald.
Thirdly, no yeoman following Robin Hoode
In Sherwod, shall use widowe, wife, or maid,
But by true labour, lustfull thoughts expell.
Fourthly, no passenger with whom ye meete,
Shall yee let passe till hee with Robin feaste ;
Except a poast, a carrier, or such folke,
As use with foode to serve the market townes.
Fifthly, you never shall the poore man wrong,
Nor spare a priest, a usurer, or a clarke.
Lastly, you shall defend with all your power
Maids, widows, orphans, and distressed men."

* See Act ii., Scene iii., of the play, as included in Dodsley's *Old English Plays*, 1874.

*Maid Marian**:—

"He who calls Robin Robert of Huntingdon, or salutes him by any other title except plain Robin Hood; or who calls Marian Matilda Fitzwater, or salutes her by any other title except plain Maid Marian; and so for all others shall forfeit a mark. Every forester shall, to the extent of his power, aid and protect maids, widows, and orphans, and all weak and distressed persons whomsoever: and no woman shall be impeded or molested in any way. All other travellers shall be invited to partake of Robin's hospitality, and if they come not willingly they shall be compelled. All usurers, monks, courtiers shall be rightfully despoiled. Postmen, carriers and market-folk, farmers and millers shall pass without let or molestation."

Towards the close of *Maid Marian* a difference from the *Downfall*, to which, as can be seen from the above, Peacock was considerably indebted, makes itself noticeable, for Prince John is unsuccessful in his designs on Marian, and all ends well; whereas in the tragedy she is finally poisoned in Dunmow Priory at the instigation of her regal lover.

If the influence of Munday and Chettle's drama is responsible for the plot, many of the Robin Hood incidents, relating to his prowess in the art of freebootery, scattered with no unsparing hand throughout the romance, are derived from other sources. To trace the foundation of all these striking incidents and interesting situations is uncalled for; but it should not be overlooked that they are by no means original, but part and parcel of the legendary matter connected with Robin Hood.

A chap-book is, for instance, to be found in the British Museum, entitled *Famous Exploits of Robin Hood; including an account of his birth, education,*

* See chap. xii. These extracts from the "Orders," as included in the novel, are not given in the right sequence, but in another that they may be the more easily compared with the above-given excerpts from the play.

and death (Penrith, date uncertain, of which Peacock seems to have made a good deal of use. The tale, "Robin Hood and the Three Yeomen" in it, which describes how the outlaw delivers from the gallows at Nottingham three men who are going to be hanged for stealing the king's venison, bears some resemblance with Peacock's account of Gamwell's rescue at Nottingham, whose life was in the same way jeopardized. The story of "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford" is like the adventure of the Abbot of Douchester, although it would appear that Peacock here was chiefly indebted to the ballad dealing with the same subject.* But the most clear case of plagiarism is the episode of the young man with "but five shillings and a ring," as related in the novel, which can be found in the chap-book nearly entirely the same under the title of "Robin Hood and Allan Adale, with his generous behaviour to two distressed lovers." †

The songs with which the romance is interspersed are written quite in the style of the old Robin Hood ballads. Those of Friar Tuck form one of its most charming features, and reminds one of Dr. Johnson's saying, that "his songs have been preferred, not only on the most solemn occasion to the Psalms of David, but in fact to the New Testament." Peacock introduces here the same burden which is to be found so often in *Robin Hood's Garland*. This can be best illustrated by comparing the song beginning:—

"Bold Robin has robed him in ghostly attire,
And forth he has gone like a holy friar,
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down!"

* Robin Hood and the Bishop. See *Robin Hood's Garland*, London, 1790, p. 12.

† There is also a ballad, "Robin Hood and Allan-a-Dale," in *Robin Hood's Garland*.

with the ballad, "Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham"—to select one almost at random from the many with this refrain—of which the first verse is as follows:—

"Robin Hood he was a tall young man,
Derry derry down,
And fifteen winters old;
And Robin Hood he was a proper young man,
Of courage stout and bold.
Hey down, derry derry down." *

The fact of Peacock having consulted various sources does not, however, minimise the merit of his work, but rather increases its interest.

Another prominent and most pleasing feature is the description of the forest scenes. Peacock had himself an understanding, not only for the scenic beauties which compose a landscape, for the outline and colouring of object, but also the tranquil enjoyment of a mind able to dream among woods and vales. This can be easily gleaned by reading his novels, or consulting the few letters written by him during some of his many visits to North Wales. It is this pleasure in rural things, united with the Robin Hood story, that makes *Maid Marian* one of the most readable and attractive of his novels. In a few sentences is here related an incident to whose description Sir Walter Scott would have devoted as many pages. In the chapter, where Marian is finally betrothed to Robin Hood, we are given an account of the ceremony, and the way in which the memorable day ended:—"The friar went through the ceremony with great unction, and Little John was most clerical in the intonation of the responses. After

* "Derry down" has been explained by Dr. Stukely to be the burden of old druidical songs that were employed to summon the people to the religious assemblies. Peacock has named one of the minor characters in *Melincourt*, who specially interests himself for old ballads, "Mr. Derrydown."

which, the friar sang, and Little John fiddled, and the foresters danced, Robin with Marian, and Scarlet with the baron; and the venison smoked, and the ale frothed, and the wine sparkled, and the sun went down on their unwearied festivity."

Maid Marian shows, too, like its predecessor, Peacock's satire at its best. The subject-matter may deal with Robin Hood, but in reality Peacock's *jeu d'esprit* is a masked satire upon his own times, and if the humour and ridicule contained are not direct, like those of Swift, they are nearly as effective, owing to the sly and insidious manner in which they are communicated. It is even possible for anyone not really acquainted with Peacock's method to read the novel without detecting the political satire which it contains. Manners, religion, the profligate luxury of the upper classes, are here discussed; but the main object that Peacock had in view has been already admirably described by an anonymous writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, to whom we are indebted for the best analysis of Peacock's writings that exists. According to him, Peacock's intention was "to exhibit the inconsistency of the popular theory of legitimate government by gravely applying it to the case reversed is the idea with which he sets out. His idea is to be worked out, not by degrading kingcraft to the level of freebooting, which would have involved him in a course of detraction satire, but by drawing such a picture of freebooting as may raise it to the level of kingcraft."* The remark of Mortimer Collins that "Peacock has no realism, and his dwellers in the free forest seem to break no commandment when they do a little merry robbery,"† is thus to be explained. Outlawry is in

James
Spedding
"Review"
his words

* See article on Peacock in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1839.

† See article on Peacock in the *St. James' Magazine*, vol. xxxvi., p. 600.

certain times and under certain conditions not only to be tolerated, but also vindicated and upheld.

Not only is Peacock's tendency to introduce a political element in his works here present, but he is also unable to quite refrain from his favourite pastime of impersonating his contemporaries for the purpose of ridicule. Harpiton, whose introduction in the novel is inopportune as he has nothing at all to do with the plot, is indisputably one of the author's numerous attacks on Southey. The allusion to the Cup of Sack—"A sad chance," said Harpiton, "to be turned out without sack," is a reference to one of the perquisites of the poet laureate's office, which was at this time occupied by Southey. The name Harpiton is explained to be derived from *'Ερπιστος*, a creeping thing, and was appropriate in its application to him, since he was then receiving £300 a year for obsequious services to the king and government. Shortly before, he had published *The Vision of Judgment*, in which he had panegyricized George III. in the most extravagant and servile fashion, that it had gained him the contempt of all disinterested and right-thinking men. Southey is described as Prince John's "travelling minstrel, or laureate Harpiton (whom he retained at moderate wages, to keep a journal of his proceedings, and prove them all just and legitimate)," and further, "this Harpiton was a very useful person. He was always ready, not only to maintain the cause of his master with his pen, and to sing his eulogies to his harp, but to undertake at a moment's notice any kind of courtly employment, called dirty work by the profane, which the blessings of civil government, namely, his master's pleasure, and the interests of social order, namely, his own emolument might require."

If the inclusion of this character is on the whole unnecessary, the chief fault of *Maid Marian* is the one

which is to be met in all of Peacock's novels. Although he is indebted for the greater part of the plot to other sources than his own imagery, he has not succeeded in welding together the various incidents of which the novel is composed. This defect of the slight succession of the events may mar the general effect of *Maid Marian*, as there often seems no peculiar reason why any one incident should follow any other, but cannot obscure the many beauties which the book contains.

These pleasant features, the idyllic style in which the situations are dealt with, even though they are loosely connected and the general interest of the subject, found an admirer in the actor, Charles Kemble, who recommended the tale to the then well-known dramatist, James Robinson Planché, for adaptation to the stage. This gentleman was so impressed by the "sparkling little tale"—to use his own words—that he decided to take Kemble's advice, and founded upon it the opera "*Maid Marian; or, The Huntress of Arlingford*," which was first performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, only eight months after the publication of the novel.

In his haste, or owing to some other reason, Planché neglected to ask Peacock, or the publisher Hookham, for the usual permission, which naturally led to an infringement of the copyright. Upon Hookham showing a wish to stop the performance of the opera, Planché visited Peacock at the India House, where he was cordially received. The latter, upon the former's initiative, seems to have afterwards succeeded in pacifying Hookham. Planché, in his autobiography, expresses surprise that Hookham should have raised any objections to his opera, since it tended to popularise Peacock's novels, and affirms that many authors and publishers had offered him money to dramatise their works, in order to secure an advantage

which he calls "the finest advertisement for a book in the world." "Its great success," writes Planché, in connection with his opera and the strained relations with Hookham, "afforded me the handsome revenge of putting a lump of money in his pocket by the sale, not only of the novel of *Maid Marian*, but of all the other works by the same author, of which a second edition was speedily demanded, and the great gratification of making the public acquainted with the works of one of the most agreeable of writers which, like too many gems 'of purest ray serene,' had remained for years unknown, and consequently unappreciated." * A few pages further on he refers again to the same matter:—"The objection was solely that of the short-sighted publisher, who could not perceive how greatly the value of his property could be increased till the gold began to jingle in his own pocket, some of it, I trust, finding the way into that of the amiable author." *

Planché's opera was performed twenty-seven times,† and owed most of its success to the brilliant acting of Charles Kemble. The latter, to whom it was dedicated, had evidently recognised that the character of Friar Tuck was suited for him, and to this may probably be attributed the suggestion of Peacock's novel to his friend as suitable for reproduction on the stage. In a dramatic journal out of this time there is a description of the celebrated actor in the part:—"Canary and broken heads are more familiar to him than Book or Bell; and his taste for venison greatly exceeds his regard for fast-days. He is a right merrie unsanctified rogue, who has put on the Friar's habit with no more spirit of Christianity

* See *Recollections and Reflections of J. R. Planché*, London, 1872, pp. 46 and 47.

† See Genest's *History of the English Stage*, vol. ix., under the date December 3rd, 1822.

about him than an Arab of the Desert."* *The Morning Post* in its issue of the day following the first performance says of Kemble:—"The Friar is a jolly ecclesiastic, who is not to be intimidated, either by bottles or blows His appearance was not only a relief to the general seriousness of the piece, but a powerful provocative to laughter and enjoyment," while *The Times* of the same date writes:—"His jest, his flaggon, and his quarterstaff flew about most merrily. He even ventured on a verse of an old ballad."

This ballad is particularly interesting, as it is said to be the only song ever sung by Kemble on the stage:—

"The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble,
Doth make a jest
Of silken vest
That will through greenwood scramble:
The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble.

"The courtly pad doth amble,
When his gay lord doth ramble:
But both may catch
An awkward scratch,
If they ride among the bramble:
The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble."†

It soon became one of the most popular of the day. This can be best illustrated by recalling the incident in "The Great Hoggarty Diamond," where Samuel Titmarsh alludes to his fellow-clerk, Mr. Swiney,—“He was always talking down at the shop, as we called it (it wasn’t a shop, but as splendid an office as any in Cornhill); he

* See *The Theatrical Observer* for December 5th, 1822.

† Sir Telegraph Paxarett refers to the original of this song in *Melin-court*, chap. iv.,—"an old song I have somewhere heard,"—and quotes a few lines:—

"Forced to scramble,
When I ramble,
Through a copse of furze and bramble."

was always talking about Vestris and Miss Tree, and singing:—

“The bramble, the bramble,
The jolly, jolly bramble”;

and Thackeray then adds, “one of Charles Kemble’s famous songs in ‘Maid Marian,’ a play that was all the rage then, taken from a famous story by one Peacock, a clerk in the India House, and a precious good place he has, too.”

The Miss Tree, to whom allusion is here made, played the part of Maid Marian, and is congratulated in the theatrical notes of the various papers, especially upon her rendering of the song, “The love that follows fain,” which was also borrowed from the novel. The caste included as well, such well-known actors as Farren, Abbott, Egeton, Pearman, and J. P. Cooke. The part that attracted the most notice was the banquet scene, which is described in *The Morning Post* as “perhaps the most splendid ever produced on the stage,” and *The Times* concludes its article on the performance of the opera with the following encomium:—“The scenery was beautiful, the landscape clear and brilliant, the architecture grandly correct. The banquet scene was in every respect gorgeous. The opera was received in the most enthusiastic manner.”*

Planché states in his *Life* that he found the plot of Peacock’s novel insufficient to form the complete framework of his opera, and that he therefore utilized other sources. These are mentioned by him in the advertisement of his musical drama,† and embrace *Ivanhoe* and a collection of legends and ballads. A

* Some lines, written after seeing “Maid Marian,” are to be found in *The Drama*, vol. iii., pp. 401, 402.

† See *Maid Marian*; or, *The Huntress of Arlingford*. By James Robinson Planché, London, 1822.

comparison, however, between the opera and the novel shows at once the great indebtedness of the former to the latter. Most of the dialogue is taken word for word from Peacock, with here and there a trivial alteration, while nearly all the best songs are derived from the same source.* The overture and music were composed by Sir Henry Rowley Bishop, who appears to have taken a good deal of it from an opera, "Guy Mannering," composed by himself, in conjunction with others, some six years before.

Another work that has been mentioned as having been influenced by Peacock's tale is Tennyson's "Foresters." It is here unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the very slight resemblance between them, as this has been sufficiently dealt with in magazine articles at the time of the publication of the late poet laureate's play. The following passages—the one taken from "The Foresters," and the other being the corresponding one from "Maid Marian"—may be given as showing that Tennyson was not quite unconscious of the existence of his predecessor's novel:—

The Foresters (Act i., Scene i.):—

Sir Richard: "I know not if I will let thee go."

Marian: "I mean to go."

Sir Richard: "But if I barred thee up in thy chamber, like a bird in a cage."

Marian: "Then I would drop from the casement, like a spider."

* The new songs are the lines at the opening of the opera, and the Finale with which it concludes; the glee and chorus at the end of Scene v., Act i.; the two solos at the beginning, and the glee at the end of Scene i., Act ii.; Matilda's song and the duet in Scene ii., and the chorus with which the same act concludes; the minstrel glee with which Act iii. commences; a recitative by Matilda in Scene iii.; and Scarlet's song in Scene iv. of the same. A list of the songs, and by whom they were sung, is included in the *Theatrical Observer*, December 5th, 1822. In this and the ensuing numbers are contained the play-bills for all performances.

Sir Richard : " But, I would hoist the drawbridge, like thy master."

Marian : " And I would swim the moat, like an otter."

Sir Richard : " But I would set my men-at-arms to oppose thee, like the Lord of the Castle."

Marian : " And I would break through them all like the King of England."

Maid Marian (Chap. iv.) :—

" Well father," added Matilda, " I must go to the woods."

" Must you?" said the baron ; " I say you must not."

" But I am going," said Matilda.

" But I will have up the drawbridge," said the baron.

" But I will swim the moat," said Matilda.

" But I will secure the gates," said the baron.

" But I will leap from the battlement," said Matilda.

" But I will lock you in an upper chamber," said the baron.

" But I will shred the tapestry," said Matilda, " and let myself down."

" But I will lock you in a turret," said the baron, " where you shall only see light through a loophole."

" But through that loophole," said Matilda, " will I take my flight, like a young eagle from its aerie."*

In taking leave of *Maid Marian* it may be mentioned that it was translated into both German and French. †

"THE MISFORTUNES OF ELPHIN."

If in *Maid Marian* the fruits of Peacock's incessant toil as an author at this time are to be seen, they are also exhibited in the same favourable light in his

* This comparison is taken from *The Novel Review*, vol. i., May, 1892, pp. 184, 185.

† *Der Forstgraf oder Robin Hood und Mariane*. Novelle nach dem Englischen, Jena, 1823.

Robin Hood ou La Forêt de Sherwood. Roman Historique par l'Auteur d'Headlong Hall : traduit de l'Anglais par Mme. Daring, Paris, 1826.

following novel, *The Misfortunes of Elphin*. There is a closeness and crispness about the entire work, and the interest is vigorously sustained from the first chapter to the last. Like its predecessor, it is not such a threadbare story as most of its author's productions, which is due to the same fact that Peacock was indebted for the plot to extraneous sources. It is replete with subtle turns of thought, conveyed in an epigrammatic style with an ironic vein running through the whole, and being interspersed with the most delightful lyrics, it is indeed what it was directly after its publication declared to be, namely, "a remarkable literary whimsicality."*

The Misfortunes of Elphin may be divided into two sections, both of which are founded upon legendary Welsh incidents—the first being the history of an embankment, used to parody certain political features of the times, while the second consists of the old romance of Taliesin mixed with certain Arthurian legends. Nearly all of the subject-matter of the latter part, with the exception of the two or three concluding chapters, is to be found in *The Mabinogion* Myvyrian Archæology and other Welsh sources.

The contents of the first part can be here given for comparison with the tradition upon which it is based, as handed down in Welsh annals. The prosperity of the plain of Gwaelod depends on an embankment, which is entrusted to the supervision of a Lord High Commissioner of Royal Embankments, Seithenyn ap Seithyn, who, being "one of the three immortal drunkards of the

* See an article in *Fraser's Magazine*, April, 1829. There are no means of ascertaining exactly when it was written. It was first published in the spring of 1829, and it is probable that the greater part of it was written during the preceding year. There are reasons, however, for concluding that the first four chapters were written some time before this date, as Lord Canning who is parodied in them, died at the end of 1827.

Isle of Britain," totally neglects his duties. Elphin, a King of Gwaelod, realizing the imminent danger of an inundation, visits him. Seithenyn, on being apprised of the danger, endeavours to vindicate himself by arguments similar to those used by Lord Canning, during the great Reform agitation. A tempest in the meantime arises, the mound is destroyed, and the retreat of Elphin and his companions from the scene of devastation described.

Originality has been claimed for this part of the tale, and this can be admitted as regards the remarkable adaptation of its contents for the purpose of political satire. But the incident of Seithenyn figures, if almost forgotten, in Welsh tradition, even though it be only cursorily mentioned in the pages of *The Marbinogian*. The scene of action is mentioned in Welsh legends, and was a congenial subject for Peacock to deal with, as he was already acquainted with it. His wife, who was born and bred in the neighbourhood, may have helped her husband in describing it, and certainly—being a good Welsh scholar—assisted in interpreting the manuscripts from which the tale was partly derived, as Peacock's knowledge in this direction appears to have been limited.* The extent of the latter's indebtedness to other sources can best be gauged by comparing his tale with the works of Welsh antiquaries who have dealt with the same subject.

The book Peacock used to supplement his own and his wife's knowledge of the district, and from which he took nearly all the material for his observations on druidical mythology, is Edward Davies' *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*. The following comparison

* The *Hanes Taliesin*, for instance, from which Peacock largely derived the second part of his story, was first translated into English by Owen Pughe, four years after the publication of the *Misfortunes of Elphin*. It appeared in the *Cambrian Quarterly Magazine*, vol. v., p. 198.

of two descriptive passages—the one taken from Davies, and the other from the opening sentences of the novel—will illustrate this:—

Davies:—"Seithinin the Drunkard, the son of Seithin Saidi, king of Dyved, in his liquor let in the sea over Cantre'r Gwaelod, so as to destroy all the houses and lands of the place, where, prior to this event, there had been sixteen cities, the best of all the towns and cities of Wales, excepting Caerleon upon Usk. This district was the dominion of Gwyddnaw Garanhir, king of Caredigiawu."*

Peacock:—"Gwythno Garanhir was king of Caredigion. The most valuable position of his dominions was the great plain of Gwaelod. This district was populous and highly cultivated. It contained sixteen fortified towns, superior to all the towns and cities of the Cymry, excepting Cær Lleon upon Usk," etc.

The submersion of the plain of Gwaelod, to which allusion is here made, has been regarded by Skene, one of the few who have mentioned it, as mythic, and the accuracy of the supposition rejected. He attributes the origin of the fable to the signification of the name "Gwaelod"—sunk or gone to the bottom, and suggests this may have arisen through a transposition of letters from Gwaedol in "Wedale, the vale of woe."† The inundation is referred to in some lines included in the *Black Book of Caermarthen* (xxxvii.), and it is probable that Peacock was acquainted with them as they stood in the original text, which had not then been translated into English. In connection with this poem, the Rev. Thomas Price has given us an account of the scene of action of the *Misfortunes of Elphin*, as the outcome of his research in the matter. It is as follows:—"It is stated that the space now occupied by the bay of

* See Davies' *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, London, 1809, p. 242.

† See Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, Edinburgh, 1868, Note, vol. ii., p. 406.

Cardigan was once a fertile and populous plain, the patrimony of Gwyddno Garanhir, but in so low a level as to make it necessary that it should be protected against the sea by an embankment and floodgates; and that, in consequence of the latter being left open by Seithenyn Veddw, the drunkard, in a moment of intoxication, the sea broke in and entirely overwhelmed the country. Although the Roman Itineraries forbid our adopting this tradition as a correct record of anything that could have occurred to that extent in the fifth or sixth century, yet it is nevertheless possible that some such inundation took place on a minor scale at that time, or else that some more extensive catastrophe occurred at a period anterior to the Roman surveys, and which has erroneously been placed in the fifth century. But, be the historical fact as it may, the lines are certainly old, and possess considerable poetical merit. The opening address to the wretched drunkard, and the call to him to behold the effects of his intemperance, the twice-uttered malediction, and the cry of distress from the perishing inhabitants, borne in the winds over the heights of the fortress—all combine to produce as striking an effect as perhaps can be found in the same number of lines in any language.”* Peacock’s account of the storm and the results that ensued from it—one of the most graphic descriptions in all his novels—exhibits a great resemblance to this epitome of the contents of the poem.

When the songs in this first part of the story are examined, it will be discovered that they also have their models in Welsh tradition. Two examples will illustrate this. The first song in the novel, entitled “The Circling of the Mead Horns,” and beginning:—

* See *Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price*, Ilandoverly, 1854, vol. i., p. 144.

"Fill the blue horn, the blue buffalo horn :
 Natural is mead in the buffalo horn :
 As the cuckoo in spring, as the lark in the morn,
 So natural is mead in the buffalo horn";

was influenced by a song, of which the first verse is as follows :—

"Fill, cupbearer, as you would avoid death,
 Fill the horn of honour at our banquets,
 The long blue horn, of high privilege, of ancient silver,
 That covers it not sparingly;" etc.

The saying of Seithenyn, "Cupbearer fill," which occurs so frequently—four times in chapter ii. alone—is evidently derived from this song, "Diwallaw di venestr," which signifies the same in English. The foundation of "The Song of the Four Winds" consists of a poem in the *Englynion of Llwyarch Hen*, and a song commencing "Usual is the wind from the south" in the *Red Book of Hengest* (vi.).

The material Peacock thus drew from Welsh annals served not only in prose and verse to form the structure of his tale; but in addition, as already said, as a marked satire upon then existing things. Saintsbury brings the oft-repeated charge of Peacock's satire being double-edged to bear upon *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, and believes that the destruction caused by the encroaching sea can as well be regarded as an attack upon the Whigs, as the ineptitude of Seithenyn an exposure of the Tories. Should this be the case, it must still be admitted that the author had primarily in his mind's eye Lord Canning and his methods, which is sufficiently indicated by his portraiture in Seithenyn. A comparison will prove this. Canning always acknowledged in argument what was undeniable in fact, and unanswerable to an unprejudiced mind. He took his stand of defence upon some specious but evasive objection, and then secured a reputation of

candour from his opponents. In the question, for example, in which Peacock was so greatly interested, that of Borough Corruption and Reform, Canning quietly acknowledged that all was not as it should be, that the evils complained of existed, and that the representation was not as efficient as it might be made, but he strenuously opposed the sweeping change required, because he considered the existing evil to be less than that which would accrue in endeavouring to apply a remedy. It is exactly this attitude—which forms such a significant feature in Canning's political career—that is adopted by Seithenyn in his defence of the embankment. The following dialogue, taken from the novel, satirizes this style of argument.

Seithenyn's standpoint is naturally made more absurd than that which was the result of Canning's analogous method of reasoning, in order that the statesman might be more effectually ridiculed:—

"The stonework," said Taliesin, "is sapped and mined: the piles are rotten, broken, and dislocated: the floodgates and sluices are leaky and creaky."

"That is the beauty of it," said Seithenyn. "Some parts of it are rotten, and some parts of it are sound."

"It is well," said Elphin, "that some parts are sound: it were better that all were so."

"So I have heard some people say before," said Seithenyn, "perverse people, blind to venerable antiquity: that very unamiable sort of people, who are in the habit of indulging their reason. But I say, the parts that are rotten give elasticity to those that are sound: they give them elasticity, elasticity, elasticity. If it were all sound, it would break by its own obstinate stiffness: the soundness is checked by the rottenness, and the stiffness is balanced by the elasticity. There is nothing so dangerous as innovation. See the waves in the equinoctial storms, dashing and clashing, roaring and pouring, spattering and battering, rattling and battling against it. I would not be so presumptuous as to say, I could build anything that would stand against them half-an-hour; and here this immortal

old work, which God forbid the finger of modern mason should bring into jeopardy, this immortal work has stood for centuries, and will stand for centuries more, if we let it alone. It is well: let well alone. Cupbearer, fill. It was half rotten when I was born, and that is a conclusive reason why it should be three parts rotten when I die."

The conclusion of this speech is perhaps the most amusing parody of Canning's Defence of the British Constitution ever written. It remains to add that the novelist does not let so grotesque and interesting a character as Seithenyn be drowned as the legend relates,

"The grave of Seithenhin the weakminded,
Between Caer Cenedir and the shore
Of the great sea and Cenran." *

but allows him to escape and reappear later on in the position of second butler to King Alfred.

Peacock has not only here introduced a celebrated statesman in the historical or legendary personage of Seithenyn, but it would appear that he was so venturesome as to use another of his characters—who likewise plays a prominent part in Welsh lore—as a means of impersonating the then reigning king, George IV. This monarch was disliked owing to his bad treatment of his wife Caroline of Brunswick and the Princess Charlotte. Gwythno Garanhir's subjects are ironically represented as being fond of him, "for even the tenth part of those homely virtues, that decorate the memories of husbands kind and fathers dear." †

* See Verses of the Graves, the *Black Book of Caermarthen* (xix), Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, vol. i., p. 309, and Text, vol. ii., p. 28.

† The following sayings are very suitable for application to George IV.—"Gwythno, like other kings, found the business of governing too light a matter to fill up the vacancy of either his time or his head," and "Gwythno and his subjects went on together very happily. They had little to do with him but to pay him revenue, and he had little to do with them but to receive it" (chap. i.). Another and more favourable account of George IV. by Peacock is contained in the "Last Day of Windsor Forest," *National Review*, 1887.

The first part of *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, which ends with the destruction of Caredigion, caused by the negligence of Seithenyn, terminates with an application to the great question of moment then agitating England—that of Reform—and sarcastically alludes to the implicit confidence, shared by George IV. and a large section of the electorate, in the old system of government as upheld by Canning.*

The second part of the story narrates the tradition—with some minor alterations—of the love between the bard Taliesin and Elphin's daughter Melanghel; the captivity of Elphin, and the successful efforts of Taliesin to rescue him. Its foundation is contained in a romance, the *Hanes Taliesin*, which was probably written in the fourteenth century, and now extant in such a fragmentary state that it cannot be said to form a very coherent story. In this MS. Taliesin, by a process of metempsychosis, is the same person as Gwion Bach, and having been set adrift by Ceridwen, is eventually found by Elphin in the weir that had been constructed for a fishery.

This is here represented as taking place near the estuary of the Dovey; whereas Peacock gives the Mawddach, a river in Merionethshire still bearing the same name, as the place of discovery. Another point of difference has been mentioned by Garnett, namely, that Peacock refrains from introducing the incident of the

* "We, who live in more enlightened times, amidst the 'gigantic strides of intellect,' when offices of public trust are so conscientiously and zealously discharged, and so vigilantly checked and superintended, may wonder at the wicked negligence of Seithenyn; at the sophisms with which, in his liquor, he vindicated his system, and pronounced the eulogium of his old dilapidations, and of the blind confidence of Gwythno and his people in this virtual guardian of their lives and property: happy that our own public guardians are too virtuous to act or talk like Seithenyn, and that we ourselves are too wise not to perceive, and too free not to prevent it, if they should be so disposed" (chap. iv.).

mysterious birth in the same place as in the Welsh original, but judiciously reserves it until nearly the end of his narrative. In the *Hanes Taliesin* Elphin is represented as being with the weir-wards when Taliesin is found; while in the novel he is only accompanied by his wife Angharad.

The following brief extracts describing the event will show the resemblance between the two works:—

Hanes Taliesin (Lady Guest's translation of *The Marbinogian*):—
 "Well, they took up the leather bag, and he who opened it saw the forehead of the boy, and said to Elphin, 'Behold a radiant brow!' 'Taliesin be he called,' said Elphin."*

Peacock:—"Angharad took it in her arms. The child opened its eyes, and stretched its little arms towards her with a smile; and she uttered in delight and wonder at its surpassing beauty, the exclamation of 'Taliesin!' 'Radiant Brow!'"

The *Dyhuddiant Elphin*, or *Consolation of Elphin* to give it its English name, that here follows in both the novel and the *Hanes Taliesin*, is by Peacock simply a translation from the latter work. Peacock, however, makes Taliesin first sing the song some years afterwards, while its original author claims that Taliesin at once sang it "to console Ephin in his grief for that the produce of the weir was lost," which is absurd, as Taliesin had only just been born. The first lines of the two poems are as follows:—

Hanes Taliesin:—

"Fair Elphin, cease to lament!
 Let no one be dissatisfied with his own,
 To despair will bring no advantage.
 No man sees what supports him;
 The prayer of Cynllo will not be in vain;
 God will not violate his promise.
 Never in Gwddno's weir
 Was there such good luck as this night."

* Another similar account of Elphin's discovery in the weir is contained in the Iolo MSS., pp. 71 and 72.

Peacock :—

“Lament not Elphin: do not measure
 By one brief hour thy loss or gain:
 Thy weir to-night has borne a treasure,
 Will more than pay thee years of pain.
 St. Cynllo's aid will not be vain,
 Smoothe thy bent brow, and cease to mourn:
 Thy weir will never bear again
 Such wealth as it to-night has borne.”

At the end of his tale Peacock includes in a poem an account of the mysterious birth of Taliesin, in a somewhat different form, as it is narrated in the Welsh manuscript. The myth supposes the Cauldron of Ceridwen to be the birthplace, not only of the bard Taliesin, but also directly of the gift of song that so distinguished him throughout life. The result of this has been that this wonderful cauldron has been regarded in Welsh tradition as the source of poetical inspiration. Llywarch ab Llywelyn, for instance, says of himself, “God, the ruler, give me a ray of melodious song, as it were from the Cauldron of Ceridwen!”* As Peacock, in the above-mentioned instance, has avoided giving a supernatural account of Taliesin's bardic gifts, so in this song of “The Cauldron of Ceridwen” (chap. xv.) there is no allusion to his having received them from the peculiar source to which their origin is in the fable attributed.

Peacock having described in the fifth chapter Taliesin's birth, proceeds to explain in the following one the manner in which he was educated. In both the *Hanes Taliesin* and *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, the hero is brought up and instructed by Gwyddno and Elphin. At this part of his story Peacock compares his own times—that are naturally described with the most scathing

* See Davies' *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, p. 20.

sarcasm—with those of the Druids. This is one of the many instances which show, like the figure of Seithenyn, that all his works, whatever they may nominally deal with, are really a running commentary on the current events of his own day. The great questions then disturbing England are all considered—the dissatisfaction with the poor-law, financial distress, and Parliamentary misrepresentation. The freedom of the Press, which George IV. and his Ministers had attempted to curtail, is alluded to, and the discontent and social misery resulting from the introduction of machinery, which Hood and Elliott have so graphically portrayed in their poems, are not forgotten. “They had no steam engines, with fires as eternal as those of the nether world, wherein the squalid many, from infancy to age, might be turned into component portions of machinery for the benefit of the purple-faced few. They could neither poison the air with gas, nor the waters with its dregs; in short, they made their money of metal, and breathed pure air, and drank pure water, like unscientific barbarians.” *

* The favourite Peacockian theme of making “money of metal” has here a reason assigned for it. This is brought about by the advantages of paper money being ridiculed in an energetic fashion:—“The advantage of growing rich by getting into debt and paying interest was altogether unknown: the safe and economical currency, which is produced by a man writing his name on a bit of paper, for which other men give him their property, and which he is always ready to exchange for another bit of paper, of an equally safe and economical manufacture, being also equally ready to render his own person, at a moment’s notice, as impalpable as the metal which he promises to pay, is a stretch of wisdom to which the people of those days had nothing to compare.” It can be gathered from this that Peacock was opposed to the economists who declared for a paper issue, and their argument that gold was too expensive to form the basis of a currency, on the ground of the liability of paper money as giving too great facilities to credit. It is this last-named possibility that he has parodied in so many of his works, and which figures so prominently in the fragment *Calidore* and the *Paper Money Lyrics*.

In this chapter, too, appears the author's tendency to look upon the ancient Welsh poems in the same manner as Edward Davies had done in the work to which reference has already been made. This deals principally with the metrical romances that chiefly influenced Peacock, namely, those known under the names of the bards Merlin, Aneurin, and Taliesin, and advances the theory that they embrace a recondite system of Neo-Druidism or semi-pagan philosophy.* This idea was adopted and used by the novelist; but has been entirely rejected by modern critics. Peacock has committed in his tale, on account of this mistake, numerous inaccuracies, as far as the interpretation of the sources from which it is drawn are concerned.

This may be shown by an illustration from the latter part of the novel. The song, "Merlin's Apple Trees," that commences:—

" Fair the gift to Merlin given,
Apple trees seven score and seven;
Equal all in age and size;
On a green hill-slope that lies
Basking in the southern sun,
Where bright waters murmuring run " (chap. xiv.)

is an imitation of a poem incorrectly attributed by Davies to Merlin beginning—

" Was there such a gift given to anyone as at the dawn
of day
Was given to Merddin ere age had overtaken him ?
Seven score and seven sweet apple trees,
Of equal height, age, and magnitude " ; etc.

* Peacock's reference to "a learned mythologist" in this connection (see p. 130, vol. ii., of Cole's edition), necessarily refers to Davies, as the theory to which allusion is here made had been alone put forward and dealt with by him before the publication of the novel. It was afterwards supported by the Hon. Algernon Herbert in two works that appeared in 1838.

Davies speculates that the apple trees have been employed by Merlin to represent the principles of Druidism, and is followed in this view by Peacock. "This song was heard with much pleasure, especially by those of the audience who could see, in the imagery of the apple trees, a mystical type of the doctrines and fortunes of Druidism, to which Merlin was suspected of being secretly attached, even under the very nose of St. David." This assumption of Davies, however, which Peacock here copies, has been shown to be utterly false. The poem in question was not composed soon after the subversion of Druidism by the introduction of Christianity, as supposed by Davies, but many centuries later, so that his conjecture of its druidical nature cannot possibly be maintained.*

Yet it is clear that Peacock from the beginning of the seventh chapter adheres closely to the Welsh original, even should he here and there make mistakes in its interpretation, or occasionally deviate from or alter it for the purpose of the story. In both accounts Elphin journeys to the castle of Diganwy as the guest of Maelgwn Gwynedd, but the reasons assigned for this by the two writers are quite different. In the *Hanes Taliesin* Elphin is described as being Maelgwn's nephew, and as readily going to Diganwy in reply to a Christmas invitation, while by Peacock he is carried off by Maelgwn and is also not represented as standing in any family relationship to him. The description of the first banquet scene in the halls of Diganwy (chap. vii.) is almost entirely derived from the Welsh MSS.

This can be shown by the following specimen of reproduction of a passage in the *Hanes Taliesin*. The

* See Stephens' *Literature of the Kimry*, London, 1874, p. 234. The lines from which Peacock's poem are derived, p. 212.

belongings of Maelgwn are so inordinately praised that Elphin's wrath is aroused, and he answers:—

Hanes Taliesin:—"Of a truth none but a king may vie with a king, but were he not a king I would say that my wife was as virtuous as any lady in the kingdom, and also that I have a bard who is more skilful than all the king's bards."

Peacock:—"That you are the best and bravest of kings I do not in the least doubt, yet I cannot think that any woman surpasses my own wife in beauty and chastity, or any bard equals my bard in genius and wisdom."

This indiscreet remark exasperates Maelgwn, who determines to test "the virtues of his wife, and the wisdom of his bard," and to this end despatches his son Rhun to Elphin's dwelling. The account of the deception practised on the king's son, which now ensues, is practically the same by Peacock as in the *Hanes Taliesin*, although there is some slight difference in the minor points of the two narratives. Elphin is now imprisoned by Maelgwn. This already occurs in the Welsh original before Rhun's departure on his quest, by Peacock subsequent to it, and as a result of his venturing to disbelieve in the veracity of Rhun's story.

A more remarkable innovation is the introduction of the love affair between Taliesin and Melanghel. The novelist cleverly uses it to explain the former's attempts to liberate Elphin. Melanghel's love is the great incentive to Taliesin's efforts in the novel, he strives to gratify the dearest wish of the daughter by rescuing the father, whereas in the *Hanes Taliesin*, gratitude to the patron for having adopted him in his youth is the sole cause of and impetus to his strenuous efforts on Elphin's behalf.*

* Peacock writes at the end of the chapter in which this is related (chap. viii.):—"This was the kiss of Taliesin to the daughter of Ephin, which is celebrated in an inedited triad, as one of 'The Three Chaste Kisses of the Island of Britain.'" It would appear from this that the incident of

Taliesin now visits Maelgwn, at whose court he sings three songs which are all adaptations of Welsh originals in the *Marbinogian* or *Myvyrian Archæology*.* In both accounts of the second banquet scene at Diganwy, Taliesin is represented as defending the chastity of Angharad and exposing Rhun. In the *Hanes Taliesin* the bard delivers Elphin at once from prison; he succeeds also in doing so in the novel, but first after a considerable time has elapsed, during which he is the hero of adventures to which scarcely a reference is to be found in Welsh records. He captures Rhun, who, irate at the bard's exposure of his deception, has again gone forth to prove Angharad's faithlessness, and negotiates with King Arthur for the recovery of Elphin. Peacock was probably induced to employ the magic king for this purpose through a song, "Kdeir Teyrnnon," in which he is mentioned as trying to release Elphin—

" A task deep and pure
To liberate Elphin."†

Upon the narration of Taliesin's visit to Caer Leon, Peacock has lavished his descriptive powers, and produced a scene which is only excelled by the graphic account of the departure from Seithenyn's castle. Peacock now uses Taliesin as the means of rescuing Arthur's wife, Glenyvar, from the hands of King Melvas of Dinas

Taliesin and Melanghel is mentioned in Welsh tradition, but it is quite possible that Peacock writes here of a triad as inedited which he himself knew to be non-existent, in order to give more reality to the story. The triads of which Peacock has made such a copious use were issued in their Welsh form before the publication of Elphin in the *Myvyrian Archæology*, vol. ii., p. 57; vol. iii., pp. 1, 199, 283.

* For the originals of some of these songs, as for others, consult Garnett's Appendix to his edition of the novel.

† See the *Book of Taliesin*, xv.

Vawr.* King Arthur, in return, enforces Elphin's liberation, and the tale appropriately concludes with the announcement of the marriage between Taliesin and Melanghel, and the intimation that their son, Ovaon, became "in the ripeness of time" the ruler over the kingdom of Caredigion.

Peacock has infused a good deal of literary interest into these last chapters by the introduction of King Arthur, and they are also noticeable as containing the only original song in the story, "The War Song of Dinas Vawr." There is almost a consensus of opinion among those competent to judge that this poem is not only the best of the many included in the "Misfortunes of Elphin," but of all that its author has written. The poets Lord Houghton and the late Richard Henry Stoddard were among its admirers. The latter has put it in his collection *Under the Evening Lamp*,† and the former has called it "perfect in its kind, with its humorous ferocity and predatory swing." These words of praise are even excelled in warmth by those of Saintsbury, who considers it "the succinctest piece of humorous modern poetry in the world."‡

✓ (It can be seen from the above that Peacock cannot claim right to originality for his novel, but that he is to be commended for the skilful manner in which he has used the sources from which it is drawn. The novel is further interesting on account of the fascinating style in which it is written, and as a successful attempt to popularize Welsh legends, as well as for its gibes at kings and governments, and unrivalled praise of semi-barbarous conditions at the expense of modern civilization.

* King Arthur is supposed to have had three wives, the daughters of mythological personages, each of whom had the name of Glenyvar, "the lady of the summit of the water." Davies' *Mythology and Rites*, p. 187.

† See Stoddard's *Under the Evening Lamp*, London, 1893, p. 243.

‡ See also *Notes and Queries*, sixth series ix., pp. 317 and 378.

“CROTCHET CASTLE.”

Peacock's next novel—*Crotchet Castle**—must also, like its three predecessors, be assigned a high rank as a literary production. It has never caught a fascinating hold of the reading public, but has done so with the few critics who have turned their attention to it, and whose praise has been so thorough as to be almost unalloyed with censure.

This delineation of every-day circumstances, with its fulness and universality of life, exhibits a marked contrast to the ordinary run of tales in vogue at the time when it was written. The author is not guilty of the fault to which most of the contemporary novelists were, namely, that of attempting to reconcile impossibilities with truth, or of writing what was a mockery and defiance of reason. He does not start out with the intention of leaving common sense behind, but rather writes in the spirit of Cervantes, who declared that “Fiction is always the better, the truer to life it is; and the more natural and probable, the more pleasing we find it. The true end of novel-writing is both to delight and instruct.”† The characters are beings somewhat like ourselves, and their actions and sayings harmonize with those with which we are acquainted. Peacock again shows here that he possesses more than a faculty of writing common sense in tolerable language, which may be produced by a sound education, but the power to affect and captivate, which is the result of genius alone.

The variety of characters enables him to bring into play the expression of different sets of opinions, and

* Written probably in 1830. Published early in 1831.

† *Don Quixote*, chap. 47.

he contrives to enrich his remarks by rendering the testimony of classical authors subservient to his purpose, but sometimes displays his learning too much, and gives, in this point, a foretaste of his last novel. He resembles here at times, as a critic once amusingly said of him in connection with his verse, a certain elegant bird which never moves without strutting.

The humour, however, is at its best. The observation for instance about "my good and respectable friend, Mr. Crotchet," may illustrate this. "Good and respectable, Sir, I take it, mean rich?" "That is their meaning, Sir!" Or the remark of Mr. Mac Quedy, who solemnly states that "Laughter is an involuntary action of certain muscles, developed in the human species by the progress of civilization. The savage never laughs." And the Rev. Dr. Folliott's reply, "No, Sir, he has nothing to laugh at. Give him Modern Athens, the 'learned friend,' and the Steam Intellect Society.* They will develop his muscles."

The other characteristics of the Peacockian novels are all present in *Crotchet Castle*. The wit is, for example, extended to the names. Should the clergyman that figures in it have a better title than his predecessors, the Revs. Doctors Gaster and Portpipe, a shaky stock-jobbing firm is called Messrs. Catchflat & Co., while the churchwarden and parish clerk receive the suggestive names of Messrs. Bluenose and Appletwig, the same strange way of terminating the discussions is resorted to. Just as Dr. Gaster is employed in *Headlong Hall* to bring a heated argument to an abrupt conclusion by some remark more stupid than the rest, or the same result achieved by the magical effect of the dinner gong, so are similar means here used—the last-mentioned one

* Modern Athens—Edinburgh. The 'learned friend'—Lord Brougham.

being so effectual that upon its summons even "the schemes for the world's regeneration evaporated in a tumult of voices."

As usual, the incidents are neither numerous nor intricate, and it merely requires a few lines to intelligibly narrate them. Ebenezer Mac Crotchet, Esq., is the offspring of a Scotchman and a Jewess, who, having inherited from his parents some good qualities, is determined to destroy, as much as possible, all vestiges of his extraction. His villa becomes a resort for literary and scientific men, with the result that the author easily provides himself with enough characters to introduce his favourite remarks on Greek, transcendentalism, contagion, education, toxicology, political economy, meteorology, and what not. The different personages are described by Lady Clarinda to her admirer, Captain Fitzchrome, in a chapter entitled "Characters." This lady is, according to her father's wish, to marry the young Crotchet, who is engaged in business affairs. As, however, the city firm with which he is associated becomes insolvent, and the speculator vanishes, she is enabled to marry the man of her own choice. A second young girl, Miss Touchandgo, who displays a most romantic disposition, after having met with some disappointment in life, is ultimately united with Mr. Chainmail, in whose person Peacock parodies the mediævalism, and thereby romanticism, of his own times.

The plot is first laid in London, the whole party then proceeds up the Thames, as Peacock had himself done in 1809 and 1815, and in the course of which references are made to Godstow, Lechlade, etc., which he had already described in his poem on the same subject; while the tale reaches its satisfactory conclusion among the Snowdonian regions, where its author was almost as much at home as in the great metropolis, where it begins.

The shibboleths of doctrines expressed by the various characters do not extensively differ from those in the other novels. Most noticeable is the trenchant attack on the *Edinburgh Review* and some of its best known contributors. The economists are satirized in the person of Mr. Mac Quedy, who is intended for John Ramsey Mac Culloch, a fellow-colleague at one time of Peacock's at the East India House. Already, in 1818, this distinguished man had made his début in the Scotch journal by contributing two essays on subjects in which Peacock was highly interested,* but from an antagonistic standpoint, and he did not leave off writing for it until his articles had exceeded seventy in number. The writer of the "Principles of Political Economy" and an "Essay on the Circumstances which determine the Rate of Wages" hears singular views, in *Crotchet Castle*, as to the value and significance of his beloved science:—

Mr. Mac Quedy: "Then, sir, I presume you set no value on the right principles of rent, profit, wages, and currency?"

The Rev. Dr. Folliott: "My principles, sir, in these things are, to take as much as I can get, and to pay no more than I can help. These are every man's principles, whether they be right principles or no. There, sir, is political economy in a nutshell."

This antipathy to Mac Culloch was due to his nationality and its concomitant traits and features as exhibited in his character and opinions. Mr. Mac Quedy claims for himself and his countrymen that he and they are thoroughly conversant with logic, metaphysics, and moral philosophy—a boast that is as damaging in Peacock's estimate as it is elevating in his own. His unbounded praise of his native land and its inhabitants meets with resolute opposition, and many of the jokes cracked, in replying to it, recall those of another hater

* An article on "Currency," and another on Ricardo's "Principles of Political Economy."

of everything Scotch. The "pound, shilling, and pence philosopher" exalts the intellectual advantages of Edinburg:—

Mr. Crochet: "..... very few intellectual noses point due north."

Mr. Mac Quedy: "Only those that point to the Modern Athens."

Rev. Dr. Folliott: "Where all native noses point southward."

Mr. Mac Quedy: "Eh, sir, northward for wisdom, and southward for profit."

This dialogue re-echoes in other words the statement of Dr. Johnson, who once declared the prospect that invariably opened itself to the thrifty and ambitious Scotchman, in spite of his admiration for the scenery of his own country, to be the high road to England.

Another Edinburgh reviewer, who comes in for a fair amount of sarcasm and abuse, is the versatile Lord Brougham. He does not himself appear upon the scene, but is alluded to, in no very complimentary way, under the name of "the learned friend." The Rev. Dr. Folliott is exasperated at finding his cook reading a sixpenny tract on hydrostatics, "published by the Steam Intellect Society, and written by a learned friend who is for doing all the world's business as well as his own, and is equally well qualified to handle every branch of human knowledge." And Peacock's ideal of common sense further expresses his opinion of him:—"I have a great abomination of this learned friend; as author, lawyer, and politician, he is *triformis* like Hecate: and in every one of his three forms he is *bifrons*, like Janus, the true Mr. Facing-both-ways of *Vanity Fair*." On other occasions he utters similar sentiments, being thereby the mouthpiece of Peacock's own views, who, as Albany Fonblanque has said, was "a bitter persecutor of the singularities and excrescences of science."*

* See his article on *Crochet Castle* in the *Westminster Review*, vol. xv., p. 208.

Mr. Firedamp: "Sir, you seem to make very light of science."

The Rev. Dr. Folliott: "Yes, sir, such science as the learned friend deals in: everything for everybody, science for all, schools for all, rhetoric for all, physic for all, words for all, and sense for none. I say, sir, law for lawyers, and cookery for cooks: and I wish the learned friend, for all his life, a cook that will pass her time in studying his works; then every dinner he sits down to at home he will sit on the stool of repentance." *

Very entertaining is finally the novelist's description of Brougham's oratorical powers. "He will make a speech of seven hours' duration, and this will be its quintessence: that, seeing the exceeding difficulty of putting salt on the bird's tail, it will be expedient to

* Peacock's ridicule of Brougham was not the first of its kind. The allusion to the cook and hydrostatics refers to the second part of his "Discourse of the Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of Science," which deals with hydrostatics. This tract appeared in 1827, and had already been attacked in the same year by a writer, under the assumed name of Paul Pry, in a series of sketches entitled "The Blunders of a Big-Wig; or, Paul Pry's Peeps into the Sixpenny Sciences (Peep the first, into the 'Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of Science'; Peep the second, into the 'Hydrostatics')." The sarcasm directed against Brougham, about education of the masses, had also more than one precedent. The Marquess of Lansdowne, for example, had published a work in 1826, which replied to his "Education of the People, addressed to the working classes and their employers," of the previous year. Another reply of the same date is the Rev. G. Wright's *Mischiefs Exposed*. Brougham advocates in his work the masses being taught principally chemistry, mechanics, politics, mathematics, etc. Peacock has been accused of inconsistency in attacking Brougham on account of his politics. It should be remembered, however, that this statesman was censured as much, if not more, by the Radicals than the Tories. Especially about this time he was opposing the ballot and endeavouring to put a limit to reform. His inconsistency in this point, together with the fact that he always remained between two parties, accounts for Peacock calling him "Mr. Face-both-ways." The distinction between Brougham and Peacock can be, perhaps, best illustrated by alluding to the statesman's agreement with Canning's *Defence of the British Constitution*, which the novelist had already parodied in *The Misfortunes of Elphin*. Both Brougham and Peacock were prepared to admit the British Constitution to be an anomaly; but whereas the former believed that its practical utility made up for its theoretical shortcomings, the

consider the best method of throwing dust in the bird's eyes. All the rest will be—

‘Τιτιτιτιτιμπρό
Ποποκοί, ποποκοί.
Τιοτιοτιοτιοτιοτιοτιγξ.
Κικκακᾶν, κικκαζᾶν.
Τοροτοροτοροτορολιλιλίγξ’;

as Aristophanes has it; and so I leave him, in *Nephelococcygia*." The last we hear of "the learned friend," in addition to this, is an allusion to his elevation to the peerage. The worthy Doctor cannot repress his satisfaction at his enemy's removal from the scene of his great activity to the inactivity and quiet of the Upper House, and at consequently having, in his opinion, "that hollow and wind-shaken reed, rooted up for ever from the field of public delusion." This hatred of Brougham on Peacock's part had been engendered

latter did not. Peacock's ridicule of Brougham for his versatility has also its foundation. He assumed familiarity with all symptoms of thought, but his own survey of their nature and influences was of the most useless character. The commonplaces with which his works are filled could not anymore be expected to appeal to Peacock than their author, who believed himself to be a disseminator of new scientific facts, although he had himself no new truths to reveal. His attempt to extend scientific enterprise to the working classes was not a success. If his plan could have been carried out to the extent that he wished, it is still questionable whether it would have proved advantageous, since the general diffusion of literary habits and scientific pursuits might end in being prejudicial, and could not at any rate be regarded as an unqualified blessing. Brougham interested himself, in a shallow fashion, in every conceivable subject—law, history, metaphysics, optics, theology, economy, literary and biographical criticism and party controversy. He always felt himself imperatively obliged to commit his views to paper. He wrote on Slave Trade, education, colonial policy, and had thought himself important enough at an early age to put together "An Inquiry into the State of the Nation." We have from him, "Dialogues of Instinct," "Experiments on Light," tracts on physical science, history, political philosophy, natural theology, etc., etc.

and augmented by his own anti-Scotch propensities. Brougham had been educated in Edinburgh, and had early identified himself with its *Review*. He shared the political and economic views that were then prevalent in the North, and tenaciously clung to the methods of philosophical criticism, which had been introduced in its leading journal by William Taylor in 1796, and adhered to by it ever since.

But the novelist has not only singled out special contributors to the *Edinburgh Review* to act as victims of his disgust at these opinions and disapproval of this style of writing. He has given us an estimate of them altogether. The authors of many clever and pungent articles are described in the most searching fashion and with the most withering irony—"a set of persons who concoct, every three or four months, a thing which they call a review. These gentlemen have practised as much dishonesty as, in any other department than literature, would have brought the practitioner under the cognizance of the police. In politics, they have run with the hare and hunted with the hound. In criticism they have, knowingly and unblushingly, given false characters, both for good and evil: sticking at no art of misrepresentation to clear out of the field of literature all who stood in the way of the interests of their own clique." A parallel instance of this exaggerated blame is to be found in the *Westminster Review*. It is directed, however, against only one of Lord Jeffrey's coadjutors; but for plainness and vigour equals the just mentioned passage from the novel. The reviewer of Coleridge's *Christabel* is called by Peacock "one who combined the most profound ignorance, and the grossest obtuseness of intellect, with the most rancorous malignity, and the most unblushing literary dishonesty."*

* See *Westminster Review*, 1830, p. 302.

This sharp criticism of the Whigs, embodied in the attack on the *Edinburgh Review*, is supplemented in another direction, but to a very small extent, by an assault on the Lakists. These are, however, not specially ridiculed for their dissension from the Liberal ranks, as is customary, but only for their idiosyncracies as poets and thinkers.

Coleridge appears as Mr. Skionar, and is eager to find the delimitations of sense, reason, and understanding. The transcendentalist settles everything by sentiment and intuition in contra-distinction to the economist Mac Quedy, who favours induction and analysis. Unjust is Lady Clarinda's remark on Mr. Skionar, in relating his partiality to dreaming—"he is a great dreamer, always dreams with his eyes open, or with one eye at any rate, which is an eye to gain." Coleridge made a liberal use of his numerous friends' hospitality, but it is somewhat uncharitable to assume that he did so for pecuniary reasons, and it must certainly be acknowledged that he displayed, during his lifetime, little or no concern in monetary matters. Here, as in other points, Peacock's portrait of Coleridge fully corresponds with those of him contained in the other novels. Wordsworth and Southey are described as his "bad company," and spoken of as exercising a demoralizing influence upon him. Only mentioned casually once or twice, they are respectively denominated Messrs. Wilful Wontsee and Rumblesack Shantsee.

A literary personage, whose identity is not easily traceable on account of his being lightly sketched and being new to the author's list of contemporary caricatures, is Mr. Eavesdrop. He is probably meant for William Hazlitt. Notwithstanding that this critic reproached the Lakists for their secession from Liberalism, and imputed unworthy motives as the reason for it, Peacock can well

be supposed to have regarded him with anything but affection. In the first place he was a diligent contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*, and in the second instance trespassed considerably on Peacock's own ground. A few years before *Crotchet Castle* issued from the press he had published his *Spirit of the Age, or Contemporary Portraits*, in which he succeeded in doing what Mr. Eavesdrop was also guilty of, namely, coining "all his acquaintance in reminiscences and sketches of character."*

Quite distinct, on the other hand, is the original of Mr. Toogood, a contrast figure to the Mr. Toobad in *Nightmare Abbey*. Robert Owen is "the co-operationist, who will have neither fighting nor praying, but wants to parcel out the world into squares like a chess board, with a community on each, raising everything for one another, with a great fire engine to serve them in common for tailor and hosier, kitchen and cook."† The opponent of Shelley's many schemes to remodel society was naturally not in sympathy with Owen's great ideal. Peacock rejected the fundamental idea of an equitable distribution of wealth, as promulgated by him, for the simple reason that, in his own judgment, it could never be carried out in practice.

Another minor character is Lord Bossnowl, who recalls the Lord Anophel Achthar of *Melincourt*, and the Hon. Mr. Listless of *Nightmare Abbey*. In the meteorologist Mr. Firedamp, the contagionist Dr. Morbific, and the toxicologist Mr. Henbane, Peacock would appear to

* Hazlitt died at the end of 1830, a time when we may assume *Crotchet Castle* to have been nearly, if not completely finished.

† Previous to the publication of *Crotchet Castle*, Owen had been the promoter of the London Co-operative Society in 1824, *The Co-operative Magazine* of 1826, *The Co-operative Miscellany* of 1830, and the first Co-operative Congress of the same year.

ridicule scientific systems rather than any particular representatives of them.*

Two characters remind us of incidents in his own life out of this time. His devotion to the opera, which was indicated by his acting as a musical critic, and appearing regularly at Covent Garden at all performances, is reflected by Mr. Trillo, who shares the same enthusiasm, and emphasizes the same wish in connection with it. "He maintains that the sole end of all enlightened society is to get up a good opera."† Mr. Philpot further, with his study of the map of Africa, and interest in rivers and steam navigation in remote regions, is a votary of a subject to which the official of the East India Company was also attached, and may be possibly intended for a distant allusion to his friend, Mac Gregor Laird.‡

Lastly Mr. Chainmail is, as already stated, employed as an instrumentality for laughing at romanticism in general. He lives in a mansion whose hall is decorated "with rusty pikes, shields, helmets, swords, and tattered banners, and furnished with yew tree chairs and two long, old, worm-eaten oak tables, where he dines with

* The introduction of Mr. Henbane in the novel, who "has passed half his life in studying poisons and antidotes," plays upon the great interest that the subject had at this time attracted. This had been chiefly brought about by translations of Mr. M. R. Orfila's works on it. His *Traité des Poisons tirés des Regnes*, &c., appeared in London as *General System of Toxicology: or Treatise on Poisons*, in 1817. In the following year another work of his was issued as *Direction for the Treatment of Persons who have taken Poison*, &c.

† See Peacock in the *London and Westminster Review*, April to July, 1834, p. 173, &c.

‡ This gentleman, with whom Peacock was on intimate terms of friendship, was, however, unlike Mr. Philpot in one most important respect. He successfully explored the rivers he wrote and talked about, and did not only pursue steam navigation as a hobby, but took an active part in its development.

all his household, after the fashion of his favourite age." Although not directly meant for Sir Walter Scott, it is nevertheless evident that Peacock caricatures by means of this character, the method of writing and living which the author of *Waverly* had been mainly responsible in reviving. In the narration of the voyage up the Thames he is alluded to in a manner that cannot be mistaken as the "enchanter of the north," is attacked by Dr. Folliott, and supported, as might be expected, by the owner of "Chainmail Hall."

The tale ends with a visit of the whole party to this residence. The uniformity of style in Peacock's works can be well illustrated by pointing out that the chapter in *Crotchet Castle* in which this event is related, has its fore-runner in those entitled "Cimmerian Lodge" and "Mainchance Villa" of a preceding novel, in the same way that the "Sleeping Venus" has its counterpart in the "Bqld Venus" of the following one.

There remain now the individuals who are employed to keep the story together, and impart an additional interest to the discussions of which it principally consists by connecting a slight plot with them. Lady Clarinda, with her simplicity and good taste, is the novelist's ideal of womanhood. He has depicted her and her lover, Captain Fitzchrome, with no inconsiderable skill; but has reached the acmé of his powers of character sketching in the Rev. Dr. Folliott.

This witty and sporting parson of the old school is the best specimen of a type of character which reappears in all his novels, and whose representative has been called a clergyman, "sometimes merely remarkable for eating and drinking, but generally a classical scholar and wit into the bargain."* By him the last-named attributes preponderate, in contrast to his other brethren

* See Jefferson Hogg in his *Life of Shelley*.

of the cloth, delineated in the previous novels, where the matter is "vice versa." On account of this Peacock was wont to say that he was intended for an "amende honorable" to the members of a profession that he had so frequently abused. The Rev. Dr. Folliott, however, shows little connection with the calling to which he belongs, and which is alone indicated by the predicate before his name. He is, if anything, rather a portrait of Peacock himself, who, whatever his position in regard to the ministers of religion might have been, was at any rate hostile to the doctrines taught by them. He shares with him the same animosity against Scotchmen and the *Edinburgh Review*, Lord Brougham, education and the universities, political economy and the like. He possesses a similar appreciation of the classical rather than the romantic element in literature, and displays an identical passion for everything Greek. Indeed every view expressed by him could be endorsed by Peacock, and it is useless to endeavour to find any one opinion of which this could not be asserted.* The writer of the article on Peacock's works in the *Review*, which had been cut to pieces in the novel, has called Dr. Folliott the "presiding genius" of the tale, and claimed much of its success to be due to his character. Since Dr. Folliott is in most, if not all aspects, a reproduction of the author himself, this can be said to be true in a dual sense.

A noticeable feature of *Crotchet Castle* form, in conclusion, its lyrics. Devoid of all overstrained sentiment, they appeal through their grace and simplicity. Garnett has called *The Pool of the Diving Friar* Peacock's masterpiece in humorous ballad poetry, and unsurpassed by anything of the kind in the language. A second

* By this is not meant that Peacock would always have supported Dr. Folliott's ideas in the exaggerated form they are sometimes presented to us.

one may be here given as a sample of his capital drinking songs.*

“If I drink water while this doth last,
 May I never again drink wine;
 For how can a man, in his life of a span,
 Do anything better than dine?
 We'll dine and drink, and say if we think
 That anything better can be;
 And when we have dined wish all mankind
 May dine as well as we.

“And though a good wish will fill no dish,
 And brim no cup with sack,
 Yet thoughts will spring, as the glasses ring,
 To illume our studious track;
 On the brilliant dreams of our hopeful schemes
 The light of the flask shall shine,
 And we'll sit till day, but we'll find the way
 To drench the world with wine.”

“GRYLL GRANGE.”

For a long time after the publication of *Crotchet Castle* its author was unable to extensively engage in writing works of fiction or other literary efforts. Five years afterwards he was appointed to an important position in the service of the East India House, which he retained for twenty years. He had now to prepare the answers to most of the Indian despatches, and submit them for approval to the Board of Control. It was

* The majority of Peacock's *bon mots* about wine, &c., were collected by Sir Henry Cole, and are to be found in his *Cuttings from Peacock*, which are preserved in the British Museum.

customary for them to be accepted without any or little alteration. His post was thus one of great responsibility, as he was called upon, during this period, to virtually take a leading part in the management of Indian affairs. Upon his retirement, however, shortly before the suppression of the Company, he again found leisure time for writing.

One of the works which resulted from this is his seventh and last novel, *Gryll Grange*. It would appear that Peacock commenced to write it immediately after giving up his work at the Leadenhall Street Office. A second edition of *Melincourt*, that was issued in the same year in which this happened, has already an allusion to it. Mrs. Clarke claims it to have been written by her grandfather in his seventy-fifth year, but it can be safely said that it was partly put together, if not almost completed, before he had reached this age. About this time, namely, it was printed in *Fraser's Magazine*. It was first offered to the reading public in book form in 1861.

The conception and execution of the characters do not present any novel features. Just the same as before, the personages are not sketched with any dramatic force, but are alone portrayed for the object of giving utterance to certain sets of opinions. Their vocation consists nearly exclusively in submitting themes for discussion, and taking part in the deliberations held upon them. These embrace a good amount of poignant sarcasm, and, as usual, broad farce is blended with serious debate. The material in them is not the offspring of pure fancy. If it would seem that the author may claim originality for these conversations because there is nothing like them in previous works, this is only the case in a restricted sense. All invention is but new combination. The art of writing consists mainly in utilizing what is most

attractive in the works and sayings of others, and of bringing the gathered result in a new whole. Taken from the social and political questions of the day, these arguments are but a reproduction of those which were then held. A chief fault is an old one. The plot is not well constructed, for neither are the events contrived with much skill, nor are they calculated to excite interest.

The drift of the tale is simple, and the purport of it may be told in a few sentences. A Mr. Falconer resides in a country house in Hampshire with a number of young ladies—the seven Vestas. The Rev. Dr. Opimian takes a liking to him, and forms the opinion that he would make a suitable husband for a niece of one of his friends—Morgana Gryll. Lord Curryfin, an amateur lecturer, falls in love with her, and continues to pay her his attentions until he suddenly transfers them to a Miss Niphet. A Mr. Harry Hedgerow now becomes attached to one of the Vestas, and provides companions who do the same with the rest of them. The hero of the tale, being now completely free, is no longer irresolute, and is finally betrothed to the youthful heiress, who had been originally chosen out for him. The other eight suitors are accepted, and the nuptials of the nine couples are all performed on one and the same occasion. The learned clergyman, who had done much in bringing them together, delivers the speech at the wedding breakfast, with which the tale concludes.

This arrangement of the marriages is about as badly thought out by the author as the similar case at the end of his first novel. The reasons given here, as in *Headlong Hall*, for their being brought about are inadequate, since there is little or nothing stated in either instance to make them appear probable. As regards plot, Peacock, during the course of a long life, had learnt practically nothing.

Learning is in *Gryll Grange*, as in all its author's novels, very much to the fore. Saintsbury has affirmed that Peacock's scholarship was superior for exactness to that of Coleridge or any other of his contemporaries.* Now and then, however, the display of it is very wearisome for the ordinary reader. As an example of this, the interposition of the chapter entitled "Aristophanes in London" may be taken, even though it has been praised by Lord Houghton as the best existant specimen for "adaptations of the great Greek comedy to modern manners." Rather tiresome to read in a tale is also the disquisition on whether hair is conducive to female beauty. To prove this not very knotty point in the affirmative, Peacock takes the trouble to exhibit his knowledge of some fifteen classical writers.†

* See his Introduction to *Rhododaphne* in the Macmillan edition.

† An estimate of Peacock's extensive learning can be easily formed by consulting two of his articles written during the time in which he was also occupied with *Gryll Grange*. That on the translations from Sanskrit by T. K. Typallus, a former Superintendent of the Athenian Library, is particularly interesting as dealing with the country in whose service a large part of Peacock's life was passed. The reviewer gives here a glowing account of the episode of "Yanadatta" from the "Ramayana," and an epitome of the war between the Pandoids and the Curavis, which takes up in Indian poetry the same position as the Trojan war in the Greek. The other article in *Fraser's Magazine* on "Müller and Donaldson's History of Greek Literature" contains various critical comments on the construction of words, etc. The admirer of Aristophanes, whose own works plainly exhibit traces of his influence, calls the old Greek comedy (Cratinus, Eupolis, Aristophanes) "the most wonderful combination the world has ever seen of splendid imagery, exquisite versification, wit, humour, and moral and political satire." He combats Müller's assertion that the invention of dramatic poetry was peculiar to Greece by pointing out that the Hindu drama had passed into its decline before the Greek had come into existence. Noteworthy is also the attitude taken up by him on the Homer question, which at this time had reached an interesting stage through the publication of Gladstone's *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*. This work had just been previously reviewed in the same journal by the Rev. Barham Zincke. *Gryll Grange* contains a reference to Müller and Donaldson's work.

Many of the author's old likes and dislikes recur in the same or a slightly different form. He who had uttered nearly thirty years before that "the essentials of style in the composition of dramatic poetry for music are simplicity and severity," still wishes that "when we have reached the extreme complications of art, we may hope to return to nature and simplicity." The great admirer of the composer Donizetti and the singer Rubini praises the latter's rendering of the former's song, "Tu che al ciel spiegasti l'ali," in the same way that he had formerly eulogized the popular airs sung by his favourite vocalist—"Ah! così né di ridenti" and "Viti tu, te ne scongioro" in "Anna Bolena": or "Tu vedrai la sventurata" in "Il Pirata."*

An antipathy to America and the Americans is added to the dislike for the Scotch and Germans. In dissonance with opinions expressed in an appreciative article on America in the *Westminster Review*, where Peacock compares the new world with the old one to the disadvantage of the latter, this bitter attack is due to political reasons, just as the magazine contribution was

* See the *London and Westminster Review* (April—July), 1834, pp. 178, 179, etc. Miss Ilex's saying in *Gryll Grange*—"Rubini identified the redundancies of ornament with the overflowings of feeling, and the music of Donizetti furnished him most happily with the means of developing this power," can be illustrated by Peacock's remark in the magazine critique, that "the poetry of the Italian Opera gains with little or no ornament the language of passion in its simplest form: a clear and strong outline to be filled up by the music." As this article is now difficult of access, the comparison it contains of the songs of the Italian Opera with the English ones of the time may here follow, as being not altogether without interest—"There is nothing in any Italian libretto at all resembling the egregious rigmarol of our modern English songs. . . . Our old English songs were models of simplicity, but our modern songs are utterly all false sentiment, overwhelmed with imagery utterly false to nature. Mr. Moore, with his everlasting 'brilliant and sparkling' metaphors, has contributed to lead the *servum pecus* into this limbo of poetical vanity."

written from and actuated by party-political considerations. The ground for this change of views as to a power, once described by him as "beyond the reach of injury from the combined despotisms of the earth an asylum for the oppressed and unfortunate of all nations,"* was caused mainly by a hatred of the revival and extension of slavery on the part of the United States.

The sarcasm aimed at competitive examinations, in addition to the customary blame of general methods of education, is obviously to be attributed to the introduction of this system in the government regulations for the examination of candidates for admission to the service of the East India Company, which had shortly before taken place. We can easily infer that Peacock must have been opposed to such a scheme. Strength of mind and sound business capabilities had more weight with him than academic attainments. In 1855 it had been agreed "to allow skill in Greek and Latin versification to have a considerable share in determining the issue of the competition." Such requirements could be of little use to an official at the India House in the discharge of his duties, although they might be excellent things to have in themselves, as Peacock himself would have been the first to acknowledge. An examination that embraced many subjects, which would be worthless to the examinee in after business life in the event of his passing, did not meet with his approval. Hence his sharp criticism of the whole system. "Questions which can only be answered by the parrotings of a memory, crammed to disease with all sorts of heterogeneous diet, can form no test of genius, taste, judgment, or natural capacity. Competitive examination takes for its 'norma': 'It is better to learn many things ill than one thing well';

* See *Westminster Review*, October, 1830, p. 313.

or rather, 'It is better to learn to gabble about everything than to understand anything.'"

Noteworthy is the chapter on ghosts which recalls the author's parody on Shelley in *Nightmare Abbey* for his giving way to the influence of romanticism. Allusion to the American Charles Brockden Brown's novel, *Wieland*, is not alone contained here. Peacock states in the *Memoirs of Shelley*, which were published in *Fraser's Magazine* during the time he was working at *Gryll Grange*, that it was especially this story of wonder that had impressed his quondam friend. By a coincidence he further mentions another writer who had influenced him in a similar manner, although there is no evidence to show that he was ever aware of it—M. G. Lewis.* That he was looking back in his old age to his early years, and particularly to those spent with Shelly, can be surmised as well from a study of Mr. Falconer's character. The hero of Peacock's last tale has the same integrity of purpose and other qualities as the Messrs. Foster and Forester of the first two novels.

The reader will find many features that are not new to him if he should be acquainted with *Melincourt* or *Headlong Hall*. As most of the other personages are more or less repetitions, it is quite unnecessary to here characterize them at any length.

The Rev. Dr. Opimian, who is drawn to Mr. Falconer by a delight in the classics, is the very image of the Rev. Dr. Folliott in *Crotchet Castle*, with the exception that he is even more aggressive with his Greek and other quotations. His tastes, "a good library, a good dinner, a pleasant garden, and rural walks," are those

* Miss Ilex's description of the appearance of Evelina's spectre to Angela, from Lewis' "Castle Spectre," would seem to be taken from the stage directions of the drama. See "The Castle Spectre," Act iv., Scene ii., and chap. xxxiv. of *Gryll Grange*.

of the novelist himself, who, as Mrs. Clarke informs us, divided his time in later life "among his books, and in the garden, in which he took great pleasure." What this lady has written can be equally well applied to Dr. Opimian or Dr. Folliott:—"In society, my grandfather was ever a welcome guest, his genial manner, hearty appreciation of wit and humour in others, and the amusing way in which he told stories made him a very delightful acquaintance: he was always so agreeable and so very witty that he was called by his most intimate friends the 'laughing philosopher.'" Mr. Mac Borrowdale is a Scotchman, who is the means of causing some fun and merriment at his own expense and that of his countrymen. Yet he is described in a conciliatory manner as, indeed, all the rest of the *dramatis personæ*, and not in the *outré* fashion in which the author had formerly indulged. Although again not among the interlocutors, Lord Brougham re-appears as Lord Facing-both-ways. He is mentioned as the president of a "Pantopragmatic Society," by which the National Association for the promotion of Social Science is probably meant. An active part, however, is taken by one of his proselytes—Lord Curryfin, who is addicted to a similar weakness for lecturing.

An innovation that comes unexpectedly is the ridicule levelled at Lord John Russell, "who was the Gracchus of the last Reform, and is the Sisyphus of the present." Peacock knew this statesman personally, since the latter had taken a prominent part in the Buckingham case, having been Chairman of the Special Committee of the House of Commons, which had considered the matter in 1826, at which the former had also been present, though he was not cross-examined. The former opponent of Canning is attacked under the name of Lord Michin Malicho. The author of *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, and

the then advocate of Parliamentary Reform, expresses opinions that are in all essentials different from those contained—for instance—in Lord Russell's "Essay on the English Constitution," which had been previously entirely in agreement with his own.*

The other characters, which are mostly introduced for the sake of the story, do not require any special comment. The Lakists do not appear, but Peacock occasionally quotes their works in a manner that does not reveal any hostility to them.

There is, as usual, a number of poems scattered

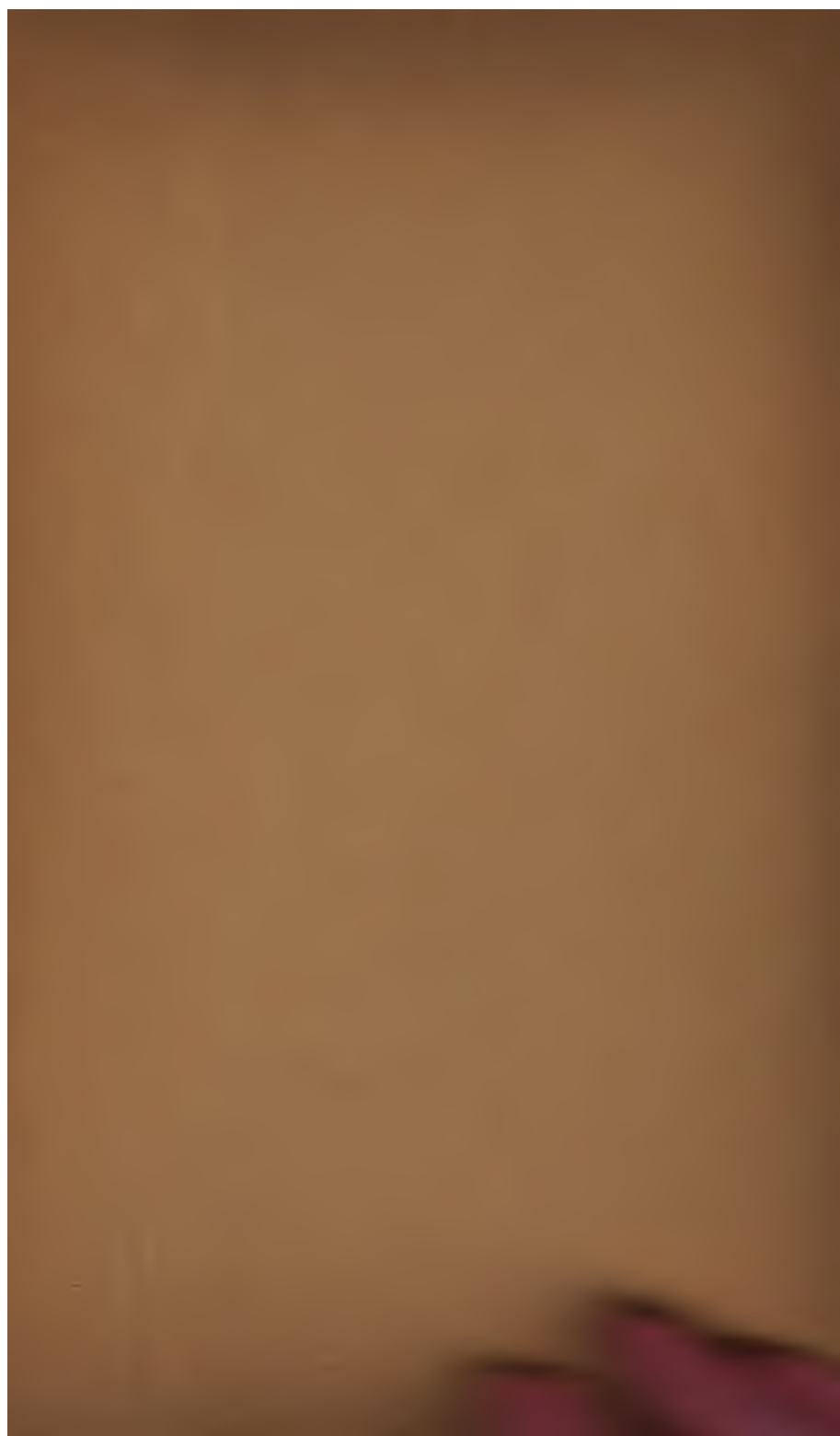
* The opinions given by Mr. Mac Borrowdale in his lecture on Lord Russell, which have been, and probably rightly, taken for those of the novelist himself, do not in themselves appear sufficient to explain the latter's change of opinion. As this passage has been mainly responsible for Peacock having been often called a Tory, it is worth while considering any other possible grounds that might have led up to it. As an Indian official Peacock was naturally opposed to Lord Russell. This statesman had endeavoured to curtail the powers of the East India Company by divesting it of its commercial character and depriving it of the special privileges therewith connected. In addition to this the disfranchisement of the very rotten boroughs, which Peacock had once taken such pains to ridicule, carried with it the exclusion of many able men from Parliament, who had passed the greater part of their lives abroad. Anyone convinced of the expediency of Indian affairs being managed in the best possible way must have regretted this. Formerly, retired Indian officials had gained admission to the Lower House by means of the rotten boroughs, as it was a comparatively easy matter for any distinguished member of their number to obtain a nomination for one of these on his return to England. Under the altered regulations they were heavily handicapped in the event of their wishing to enter the House of Commons by having to first secure the favour and support of the electorate in a constituency in a very short time, whereas their opponents had opportunity enough to acquire the necessary local interest to ensure election. It was, perhaps, partly the recognition of this, which had been once overlooked by him, that converted the supporter of the Reform Bill into an opponent of the Reform Act, and any further extension of the principles upon which it was based. At any rate it seems premature to conclude from this passage, as has been done, that Peacock was necessarily an advanced Tory at this time, and quite absurd to assume on account of this that he had always been, more or less, nothing else but one.

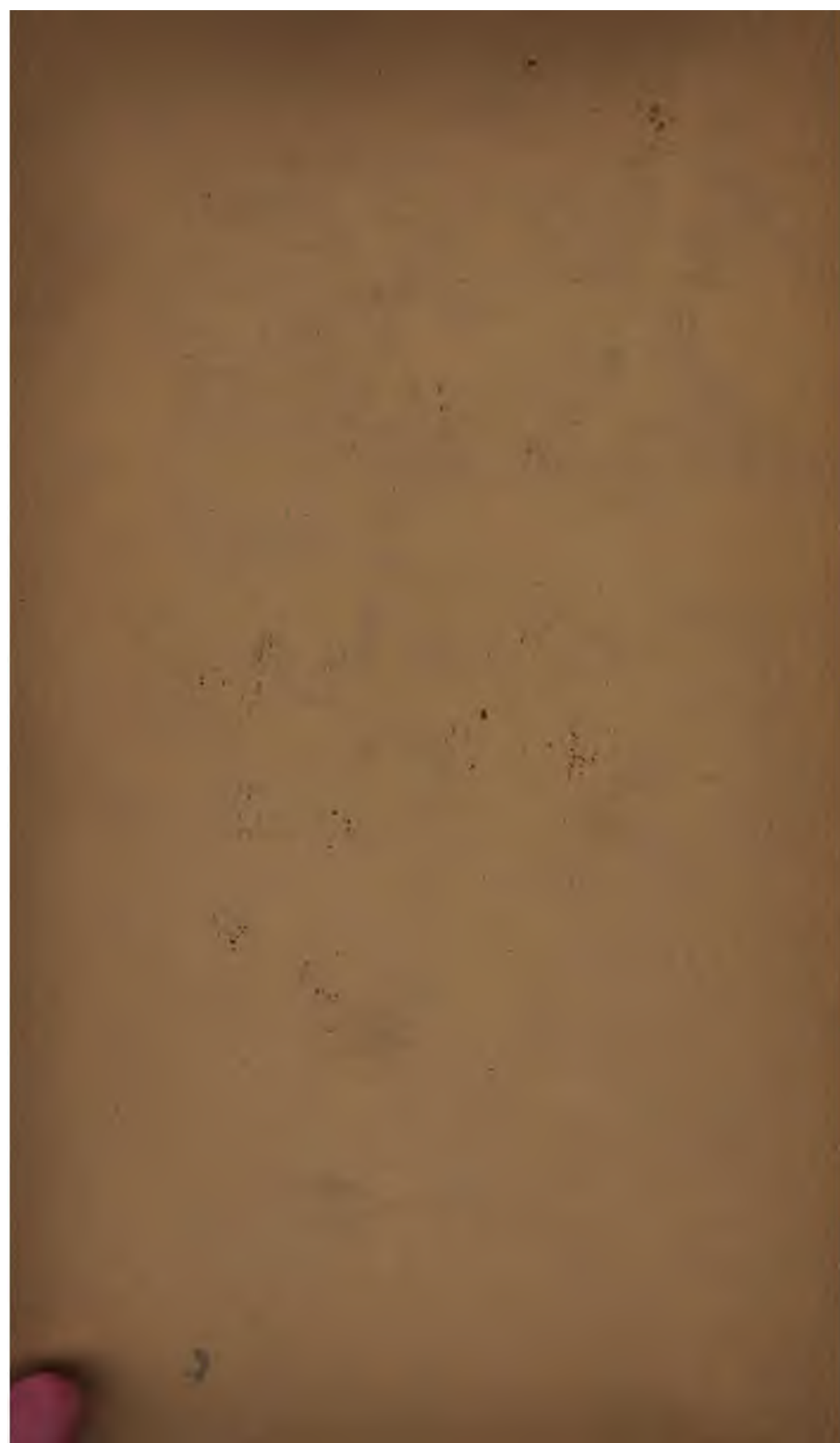
throughout. One of these attracts notice by its extreme beauty—"Love and Age"—and another through its bad taste—"A New Order of Chivalry." It is a singular fact that the last novel contains this poem directed against the Jews, since its author's first volume of verse of any importance had some lines—"Levi Moses"—to the same effect. These are the only symptoms of intolerance to the Jews exhibited on his part.

In the opinion of the writer, *Gryll Grange* has been somewhat overrated. Although written in Peacock's unique style, it is at times very laboured and Johnsonian in expression. To the reader who is already acquainted with the other novels it has little that is striking or new to offer. Owing to its contents and great length, a perusal of it is easily liable to prove monotonous, especially to anyone whose literary interests are of a superficial nature.

Elsewhere Peacock has written of some conversations—"we would print these dialogues if we thought anyone would read them: but the world is not yet ripe for this 'haute sagesse Pantagrueline.'" These dialogues, however, if printed would only have been part and parcel of the material of which all the Peacockian tales consist. The novelist himself saw clearly that his subject-matter could not reckon on attaining popularity, but only the approbation of the few. Yet his stories deal with tangible realities, and not with obscure or absurd situations, as is the case with those of many novelists. For this reason alone they deserve to be widely known, as also their author, for having helped to raise the tone of novel-writing at a critical juncture in its development, by introducing into his tales instruction and information.

I, ARTHUR BUTTON YOUNG, was born at London on the 19th June, 1877, as the son of the late Henry Button Young. I was educated at the City of London School (1889—1895) and St. Catharine's College, Cambridge (1897—1900). Of this University I possess the degree of "Master of Arts." I matriculated at Heidelberg University in the Spring of 1901, and remained there for two terms; afterwards proceeding to Freiburg, where I am now in my fifth term. During my whole course in Germany I have studied English and Germanic Philology and Art History.





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